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THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

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The Immortality of the Human Soul

PHILOSOPHICALLY EXPLAINED

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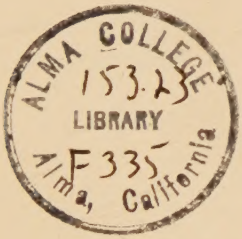

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TO

THE RT. REV. ABBOT

FROWIN CONRAD, O.S.B.

IN MEMORY OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION TO THE HOLY PRIESTHOOD, AND THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF HIS ELEVATION TO THE ABBATIAL DIGNITY, THIS TRANSLATION IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

THE question whether we are to expect a future life must be of paramount importance to all men.

We are naturally interested in all that *is*. We seek to pry into the most secret laws of nature and to advance to the knowledge of the ultimate constituents of matter. We pursue light, sound, and electricity even into their most secret recesses, and are continually labouring to ascertain the nature, number, and velocity of their oscillations. The remotest celestial bodies, though they be milliards of miles distant, excite man's interest; from decade to decade our telescopes are pointed at them for the purpose of discovering their constituents by means of light-refraction and spectral-analysis, and to form a judgment upon their origin, degree of development, and probable

end. All the living beings of our globe stimulate our curiosity: the smallest plant is placed beneath the microscope for the purpose of understanding the genesis, motion, growth, and dissolution of the cell. There is no animalcule that could not captivate man's scrutinising eye, which seeks to obtain an accurate representation of the organism, mode of life, home, and purpose of all that lives.

And still, in all this hubbub of life, of all the creatures that inhabit this globe, even to the remotest regions thereof, there is one which must have the greatest charm for man, one which is most deserving of his consideration and study: that, namely, which is most closely allied to him—he himself. If every being is naturally engaged, first and above all, with itself, and is primarily intent upon its own development and perfection, should man then be the only exception? Man may have taken deep draughts from the fountains of knowledge, but as long as he remains ignorant of his position in this world and of his relation to his fellow-creatures, as long as he has no knowledge of his own development, and more especially of his final destiny, so long his intel-

lectual acquisitions are of little or no value, because they lack the foundation and the crown.

The question of immortality is one of paramount importance, carrying in its train incalculable consequences. Man's view of life and all his tendencies are dependent upon it. Am I mortal: but a handful of earth, or at most a delicately structured animal, destined to vegetate for a span of years and after that to pass away?—then this present life and its enjoyments are my highest, because my only, ambition. Then the fruition of the greatest possible luxury is the fundamental principle of life: all else is vanity. But if I am more than matter, if I have an immortal soul, then life is immediately portrayed from another point of view. Then must I, in as far as I wish to act reasonably, conform my life with this prospect of immortality; then the consummate value of the *here* is brought into a relation with the *hereafter*, and everything becomes null and void as soon as it ceases to be conducive to that future life. From this we can easily see how the whole moral law depends upon immortality. This is the real weight of the

question: What will become of me when I am dead?

It is an acknowledged fact that the question of the soul's immortality is fraught with consequences; for this reason the advocates of the several philosophical systems have ever plied their minds with it, and it is especially from the position they take in regard to this question that the correctness or falsity of their views are brought to light according as they establish the belief in a future life, or contradict it.

Taking a glance at the adversaries of immortality, we forthwith perceive a twofold tendency. The one, Pantheism, denies personal immortality; the other, Materialism, disowns immortality in general.

According to Pantheism, the whole universe is but one being, of which man is the most perfect manifestation. After the death of the body, the human mind, "that transient apparition of the Absolute," is again resolved into the Universal Being. It continues, indeed, to exist, but only in the Absolute, and not as a distinct individual. Evidently such an immortality that denies to the soul all continuation of its personal existence, and that

compels man to offer his independence and individuality as a holocaust on the altar of the Universal Being, is worthless, and incapable of diffusing a soothing influence upon our present life. In fact, such an impersonal existence is tantamount to a total denial of immortality: for what difference is there whether my soul simply ceases to exist, or whether it is absorbed by the universe and continues in a state of unconscious and impersonal existence? In both cases the proper life of the rational soul, which is principally exercised in acts of self-consciousness, conscious thought, and free volition, ceases. Finally, the thought of being absorbed by the Universal Being exerts no greater influence upon our moral life than that of sheer corruption and annihilation.

Materialism, too, sins against all sound philosophy when treating of the soul's immortality. Upon the question, What is man? the materialist answers: "Man, both in his corporal and spiritual being, is the most perfect type of the animal kingdom, in particular of the mammals." He is an animal, and has as forbear the anthropoid ape. Our

descent from this humble lineage need not cause the blush of shame to appear on our countenance, for, as Büchner assures us, "the more humble our origin, the more exalted is our present position in nature; the more insignificant the beginning, the more magnificent the consummation." The conclusion drawn from such premises is palpable: as man participates in the origin and nature of the animal soul, so also does he participate in its final destiny. Man, therefore, has no more claim upon immortality than the beast of the field. The natural scientists are the chief adherents to this theory, and the bold-facedness which characterises its appearance in innumerable popular tracts has a stupefying effect, not so much upon the masses as upon the "learned."

Very often, however, these materialistic and pantheistic views are somewhat tempered, and thus endued with a more modest garb they do not flatly deny the "hereafter," but confidentially relegate the problem to the regions of the "Inexplicable." The whole question is absolved by the soothing — *Ignoramus et ignorabimus.*

Our modern Protestant philosophy and theology have also been contaminated by the errors of Materialism, Pantheism, and of Monism in general. And if we bear in mind the influences exercised over modern thought by Kant's *critical* philosophy, it is not surprising to find even among the foremost Protestant theological works assertions to the effect that immortality cannot be established by arguments drawn from reason. "Our intellect is confined within certain natural limitations. The consequence of this is that all attempts at establishing scientifically the continuation of personal existence are futile." Thus Lipsius, professor at Jena.[1]

Professor Pfleiderer, of the University of Berlin, says: "Individual immortality can never become an object of knowledge that can be firmly established by positive scientific arguments; it is an *object of hope* whose depths our intellect is unable to fathom. . . . Though there are no cogent proofs for immortality, much less are there such against it."[2] "It is

[1] Dr R. A. Lipsius, *Lehrbuch der evangelisch-protestantischen Dogmatik*, 2nd ed., p. 857.

[2] Dr O. Pfleiderer, *Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, II., 524.

my opinion that we must abandon all attempts of superseding metaphysical argumentation by apodictical certitude in the question of the possibility of immortality. And this (apodictical certitude) is not at all required; for the concession of metaphysical possibility amply serves our purpose. Moral motives are thereby given free scope, to engender in us a religious conviction which, though subjective, may nevertheless be as sincere and efficacious as any objective knowledge."[1] This, too, casts the shadow of doubt upon the soul's immortality.

Another prominent Protestant theologian[2] says: "The transposition of vital elements in the religious relations between Creator and creature into another life is a mere figment of the mind, which the more it is insisted upon, the more it betrays either unscientific thought or irreligious sentiments." After adopting this sentence of Schleiermacher, Biedermann warns[3] the Protestant theologian not to be satisfied with merely quieting his *scientific* conscience, but to have courage

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 526.

[2] *Christliche Dogmatik*, von Dr G. S. Biedermann, 2nd ed., p. 652.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 645.

enough to fulfil his principal duty, that of logical thought, in the treatment of this question. Both in religious and moral respects the denial of immortality is in his opinion the more exalted point of view. "It may be assumed that the religious consciousness can subtilise itself to such an extent as no longer to look upon immortality as a religious postulate," and "to peacefully submit the decision of this question to God and the future by denying the human mind the competency of its solution." Biedermann thinks that man has no need of knowing anything about immortality. "Certainly," he concludes, "this is the true standpoint for the religious conscience." Evidently, from this *standpoint* every untoward truth, nay, all religion, all Christianity, can be swept away with one blow.

How different is the *standpoint* of *faithful Christendom!* It no longer looks upon immortality as a question; for, long since has it received a divine answer. The faithful Christian is firmly convinced that when once the *fact* of Divine Revelation is finally established by incontestable proofs, it is no longer a mere matter of course, but a strict duty for all

men to abide by that decision, and to accept it as absolute truth, even though it were impossible to confirm it by rational arguments.

The faithful Christian therefore, in treating this subject, does not absolutely demand arguments based on reason; nevertheless it is a very gratifying circumstance that so weighty a truth is not *wholly* dependent on supernatural revelation. "Pure," natural reason is self-sufficient to establish with *absolute certainty* the immortality of the soul. The proofs adduced are of such a nature as to be accessible to, and convincing for, all unbiassed men. We do not wish to say that all, without exception, can follow our line of argument—*est enim arduum*, says Cicero — nevertheless, when once grasped, it is so persuasive, that to deny or doubt the immortality of the soul in the face of it were on a par with a revolt against reason.

A clear and simple exposition of the proofs in vogue in Christian philosophy for the explanation and corroboration of the immortality of the soul is the aim of this treatise.

We shall make no hypotheses that are not

well-founded and universally acceptable. The only fundamental hypothesis of our whole line of argument is exactly that upon which the whole structure of modern science rests: As all other creatures, so also is man an entity. He is not an abnormity, in which nature, disposition, faculties, activities, mode of life and purpose, are but a senseless and aimless fabric of chance. On the contrary, man is a consistent whole, in which nature, disposition, faculties, activities, and purpose are in mutual consonance. Just as botanists and zoologists arrive at the essence and purpose of plants and animals by concluding from their actions and dispositions; so we too shall follow the same course in our examination of a creature which, to say the least, is *not* the *least* of creatures.

In method also we shall follow the modern natural sciences. We shall draw our conclusions from observations, facts, and realities. Naturally, our observations cannot be confined to the mere material life of the body, to mere physical facts; no, they must transcend the realms of matter and enter into the spheres of man's higher rational life.

But an educated man does not content himself with an enumeration of bare facts; he soars aloft on the wings of knowledge until he has arrived at that eminence from which he can gain an introspective view of the nature and final destiny of that principle from which the activities of man's higher life originate. Every honest and unprejudiced researcher will extend his investigations for truth to all places where there is hope of finding it. We shall therefore not only state the facts, but shall also deduce all "justifiable" conclusions.

Following shall be our plan of procedure: first we will prove the existence of a vital principle, a soul, which is essentially distinct from the body. Then, from the physical nature of the soul, will show both the *potentiality* and the actuality of continued existence. Following this, a further elucidation of the *spiritual* nature of the soul shall clear the road for a crushing argument in favour of immortality. Hereupon we will show how the *universal desire for happiness* and the moral nature in man make immortality an absolute necessity. Then we

will briefly investigate whether the conclusion from the effects of the belief in immortality upon mankind to the truth of this belief is admissible; and finally we will answer the question whether the *universal testimony of the human race* is of any demonstrative value for immortality. In conclusion, we will briefly portray immortality in the light of Revelation.

IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

CHAPTER I

THE HUMAN SOUL IS ESSENTIALLY AND RADICALLY DISTINCT FROM THE BODY

"Est illud quidem vel maximum, animo ipso animum videre."—CICERO, *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. 22.

EVIDENTLY the first question that presents itself to the mind of one who wishes to convince himself of the immortality of the human soul is: Has man a soul at all?

The existence of the soul is not really a question for our immediate conviction, for our self-consciousness; nor is it a question for "sound human reason," nor for mankind in general. It becomes a "question" only in so far as we would institute a scientific investigation into the nature of our principle

of life, thought, and volition. In this laborious task we might easily be exposed to the dangers of error and doubt; but where there is any possibility of doubt, negation is not far off. Yes, even in regard to the human soul scepticism and negation have played a very prominent rôle. If for centuries past there have been "learned men" who denied the existence of the universe; who went so far as to deny their own existence: should we then be surprised to find the most contradictory opinions respecting the human soul? It is indeed a peculiarity of the things that are nearest to us that a more critical examination of their nature, and a scientific establishment of their existence, very often cause us no little difficulty. What, *e.g.*, is more simple and more current than the ideas of good and bad, of justice and injustice? And still, how difficult is it to define these terms; and what confusion reigns concerning them! Besides, we have no immediate perception of the soul's "nature"; we perceive its activities, its life, and in and through these the soul itself. Thus we see that, notwithstanding the

spiritual contact in which we continually live with our soul, a certain haze necessarily encumbers our consciousness thereof.

It would not, however, be right to hold the existence of the soul as less certain, because it is not so evident as to exclude all possibility of doubt.

If, therefore, the existence of the soul is not a question for immediate cognition, but rather an object of immediate conviction, it remains to be seen whether it can be scientifically established. Can that natural conviction stand the test of sound, scientific investigation? The sequence will prove that even from a scientific point of view the existence of a soul really distinct from the body cannot possibly be denied.

If soul meant nought but a principle of life, thought, volition, etc., it would be evident that man has a soul, and nobody would deny this. But if we continue our investigations, and seek to find out what this soul is in itself, and what its relation to the body, we are forthwith confronted by a divergence of opinions. The materialists of our day define "soul" as "a collective name for the sum of

our mental and neural activities; just as respiration or breathing is a collective name for the activities of the respiratory organs, the word digestion for the activities of the digestive organs, the word circulation for the activities of the circulatory organs. *Soul*, therefore, does not denote an entity, a subsistent being, but merely a more or less complicated function of matter. The philosophical schools, besides making a gross error, bring confusion into the most simple affairs when they attribute a reality or substantiality to words that have only a conventional meaning." Thus L. Büchner, the author of *Force and Matter*, in his work *The Future Life and Modern Science*.[1]

Büchner's proofs, as those of all materialists, are based on the dependence of the psychological life on the body and material impressions. The soul is born with the body; moreover, the higher psychic life grows with the organism; it is hardly perceptible in the child because of the immaturity of its organs, but, though feeble

[1] Second ed. See also Büchner, *Physiolog. Bilder*, II., 168 *sq.*

at first, grows stronger by degrees. Only when the development of the organism is perfect the consummate powers of thought and volition are evoked into activity. Disease and suffering of the body affect also our psychological life. The continuous dependence of the soul on the body is best portrayed by the strict correlation that exists between the development of the brain and the maturation of the intellect. Again, every thought is the result of cerebral motion: thought follows upon an impulse given the brain by some physical force. A derangement in the cerebral functions effects a similar condition in the psychic life; and as soon as the function is restored to a normal condition, the psychic disease immediately disappears. Evidently, then, the brain thinks, and modern science is perfectly justified in rejecting a spiritual faculty of thought over and above the brain.

Let it first of all be remarked that these proofs did not spring Minerva-like from the mind of some modern lecturer on philosophy. Apart from the fact that men of all ages have ever felt the dependence of the soul on material conditions, we know that the

objections of Plato's Simmias[1] against Socrates are based upon the same grounds, and that the schoolmen of the Middle Ages have already raised and solved these objections against the existence of the soul.[2]

The theory, therefore, together with its proofs, is nothing novel; but neither is it correct. A single word would suffice to reduce the whole line of argument *ad absurdum:* the word *liberty*. Man is free; his will, though influenced by, is dependent neither on the body nor on material impressions. It can exercise its activities contrary to all outward impulses. This is an evident, universal fact; a fact indisputably attested by man's conscience. Of course Materialism "logically" denies the existence of a conscience; but this denial cannot be invigorated by even one *scientific* argument. Where should such be found? Mere assumptions, however, besides having no solid footing before evident facts, do not belong to the spheres of "exact science."

[1] *Phædo*, c. 36. See also Cicero, *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. 27.

[2] *Cf.* St Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. ii., c. 63 *sqq.*

At all events the will is not merely a function of organised matter; because matter, as Materialism itself allows, is not endowed with liberty: it is subject to the hard law of necessity. Hence there must be another principle in us that wills: a *free* soul.

But besides being in contradiction with the incontestable fact of the will's freedom, the above materialistic line of argument is based on a rank sophism. All the alleged facts undoubtedly prove the universally acknowledged and trivial truth that a head without a brain neither thinks nor perceives; that the brain is, at least in this life, an indispensable *condition* for man's mental activity. But what does the materialist conclude? He assures us that the brain is not merely an essential *condition* for thought, but that it is the *cause*, the sole cause, of man's mental activities.

If we subject this *scientific* conclusion to a closer scrutiny, we shall find that the materialist can justify his theory only by a subversion of the first principles of thought. He argues: "Two things that are necessarily dependent one on the other are

identical. But the functions of the soul are necessarily dependent on the brain. Therefore brain and soul are identical." Let us manufacture some similar *logic:* The operations of the eye are necessarily dependent on light. Therefore eye and light are identical. Or, can the eye see without light? When profound darkness sets in we see nothing whatever; but with the gradual approach of dawn the eye sees, dimly at first, but more and more clearly as the sun advances to its zenith. With the setting of the sun our vision again grows dimmer and dimmer, until it is wholly obscured by "the sombre pall of night." And still no one would be so foolish as to say light sees. Rain and sunshine, manure, etc., are necessary conditions for growth in the vegetable kingdom; therefore they are the vital principle of the plant. Such an argument would justly deserve ridicule; but is there any difference between this and the above materialistic reasoning?

Again, the brain, though a necessary condition, is not by any means a cause, and much less *the* cause, of mental activity. And

yet the materialist makes it such when he assumes thought to be the product of cerebral motion. When a telegram is dispatched, every letter produces a change, or at least molecular motion, in the substance of the wire; therefore — thus must the materialist conclude—every telegram is but the product of the wire's activity; an intelligent being, an operator, is as superfluous as a thinking principle in man. We, however, carefully distinguish between the contents of the telegram and its material transmission: of the latter the telegraph is the actual cause; of the former the operator is the exclusive cause. Two facts are certain: that the brain is the necessary organ for the formation of phantasms; and that in the present life the phantasm is a necessary *condition* for thought. These two facts suffice to explain fully the dependence of our mental activities on the attitude and co-operation of the cerebro-spinal axis. Since, in the formation of phantasms, the central nervous system must necessarily be brought into action, and since no organic activity is performed without a chemical transposition of the molecular

constituents of the organ, thought itself is not produced without a simultaneous change in the cerebral substance. Consequently, a derangement in the brain is necessarily followed by a disturbance in the phantasy which, in its turn, interferes with the working of the intellect much in the same way as a storm or any internal disorders of the telegraph affect the contents of the dispatch. But, *omnis similitudo claudicat*, and hence the similarity between telegraph and intellect cannot be altogether perfect. We must always bear in mind that there is an essential union between soul and body, and that this greatly facilitates the explanation of their mutual dependence.

The conclusion, therefore, that the psychic functions are material because they depend on the body; or that the brain is *the* cause of thought, nay, the thinking principle itself, is entirely unjustifiable. It is a sophistical conclusion.

* * * * *

Had we merely to refute the materialistic doctrine of the soul, the foregoing should

suffice. But our task is positive; we must, in contradiction to every *monistic* theory, portray the dualism in man, *i.e.*, we must establish a positive irrefutable proof for the existence of a permanent principle really and essentially distinct from man's body, of a principle that forms at the same time the basis of his "higher life."

The first fact that we notice is: man *thinks*. Whence then does thought originate? Are soul and thought, as some materialists say, identical, so that we simply have this higher power without a permanent, substantial principle that thinks, wills, and is self-conscious? This is as impossible as motion without a motor; walking without one that walks; sight without a substantial organ that sees; and speech without an organ that speaks. All these are activities; but where there is action there also must be an active principle; and where there are faculties and powers, there also must be a subject in which they inhere. We must, therefore, have some abiding principle that thinks: soul and psychic life cannot be identical. But what is this thinking principle? Is it, as materialists say,

the body with its physical and chemical powers that produces, through the material organisation, the more subtile mental activities?

Such an explanation is unthinkable and impossible, because it contradicts the most evident phenomena of our psychic life; namely, self-consciousness and thought, neither of which could proceed even partially from the organism. Both these activities categorically demand a higher principle as their exclusive source. In proving this, we shall base ourselves on processes that are evident to all men.

There is hardly a fact of which my self-consciousness gives such clear and unmistakable testimony as of the existence of a principle of unity in me. I naturally feel that I *am;* that I am distinct from all extraneous matter; that I am a unit. Nature herself implants this self-consciousness into man with such indisputable evidence that he needs no one to inform him of the fact of its existence. Had I not been informed that I have a brain, heart, lungs and nerves, I might eventually have remained ignorant of them. But that I am a unit

is knowledge gratuitously bestowed on me by nature; it is one of the first things that dawns upon the child, nay, it may be called a norm by which to detect the intellect's awakening. Moreover, I feel myself to be a being of absolutely indivisible unity. Indeed, the consciousness of the *ego* is not local; it tells me clearly that it is not exclusively in the head, nor in the heart, nor in any other special part of the body; no, it is precisely one and the same personality that extends throughout the whole body. Hence I refer all my actions and all my sensations to the same principle. I am conscious that *I* walk, that *I* see, that *I* think, that *I* will, that *I* feel pleasure or pain in the several organs of my body. It would also be against self-consciousness to believe that it could be divided into several personalities. This self-consciousness is therefore an indisputable testimony of our simplicity and indivisibility, and hence in our supra-sensuous activities we can only conceive ourselves as most simple and indivisible beings.[1]

[1] Our conscience must not be considered as exclusively intellectual. For, as the inner sense (*sensus internus*)

The question now arises: Does this simple and indivisible self-consciousness proceed from the body? Materialism assures us that it does. Büchner tells us that self-consciousness is a "property of organised matter."[1]

The body, the organism is, indeed, a unit, but this unit is effected by the combination of a plurality of organs, a cohesion of parts. Now, can this aggregate of parts be the source of that most simple act through which we become self-conscious? By no means: for the aggregate is either real or ideal.

If it is merely ideal, it can explain nothing

perceives the activities of the outer senses (*sensus externi*), so it perceives also—more or less according to circumstances—the parts of man in which there are perceptions, and the whole man. Thus the animal, too, has something similar to conscience, in as far as through its inner sense it can perceive the several parts of the organism. But there is a very great difference between this "conscience" of the animal, and the unity of man's *self*-consciousness. The animal, no doubt, perceives "its pain," but it cannot distinguish between the "I" that has the pain and the pain itself. What the animal perceives through its inner sense as a *concretum indivisum* "my pain," man, through his self-consciousness, divides into the two concepts "I" and "have pain," and then combines them in the judgment.

[1] *Das künftige Leben und die moderne Wissenschaft*, 2nd ed., p. 94.

to our present purpose; on the contrary, it would subvert the evident facts of our self-observation, because in self-consciousness our activities are not *thought* or *imagined* to be combined, but they are *really perceived in one ego.* But if, on the other hand, the *real* aggregate of physical parts is said to be the source of self-consciousness, we may ask: How are we to imagine that the conjunction of several personalities should effect one most simple self-consciousness? The phantasy is made to lend assistance in the explanation: imagine these several personalities meeting in a similar way as the flames of two raging fires meet and form one immense pillar of fire. Should this be the case, we must again ask: Who is the subject of this fire-pillar of self-consciousness, of this uniform aggregate of single consciences? It can evidently be nothing else than the several organs or the several brain-cells respectively. But this is absolutely impossible, because a uniform combination of habitudes without a combining reality is a mere figment of the mind.

The organism, "organised matter," cannot,

therefore, be the source of the indivisible self-consciousness. Even Lange,[1] the renowned historiographer of Materialism, makes the candid avowal: "Where is the place of sensations if we acknowledge atoms? Is it in their combination? Then they (sensations) are in the abstract, *i.e.*, objectively nowhere. Are they in the motion? That were tantamount. We can accept none but moving atoms as the seat of sensation. How, then, is sensation formed into consciousness? Where is the latter? Is it in a single atom, in the abstract, or perhaps in empty space, which would then be no longer empty, but filled with a peculiar immaterial substance? . . . The question as to where and how the motions pass from manifoldness into the unity of sensation cannot only not be answered, but when we thoroughly sift the matter, we shall find such a process to be utterly indemonstrable, nay, unthinkable." To this, C. Flügel[2] very pertinently remarks: "From what Lange here rejects as untenable and impossible, it follows, strictly speaking,

[1] Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, i., 390.
[2] Flügel, *Die Seelenfrage*, 2nd ed., p. 105.

that the last and only possible resource is the acceptance of *one* real being as the foundation and point of concentration of man's several psychologic conditions. That Lange does not draw this conclusion, but even rejects it as impossible, is due to his prepossession for Kant's transcendental idealism."

From all this we see that the above facts which indisputably attest the unity of self-consciousness are not at all denied by Materialism. It merely refuses to acknowledge the conclusion that, with the presupposition of *one* indivisible being as the source of self-consciousness, this being must necessarily be an immaterial principle, a soul.

Moreover, the fundamental principle of the unity of self-consciousness must ever be *one and the same independent, indivisible being.* For self-consciousness displays an utter independence from the changes and modifications in the organism. It neither grows with the body nor is there any correlation between the development of the organism and the intensity of self-consciousness. Children and delicately constituted people

have as tenacious a self-consciousness as men of the most stalwart physical constitution. But if consciousness emanated from the organism, it would necessarily share in the body's modifications, and be in a strict correlation with its size and strength. Facts, however, prove the contrary: amputation of arms and legs does not in the least diminish self-consciousness, although the person knows full well that his personality was also in those limbs. Is not this a proof that the body is not the source of self-consciousness, and that there must be some principle totally independent of extension and magnitude?

The fundamental principle of self-consciousness must, furthermore, be *exempt from material change.* Materialists themselves assure us that our organism undergoes, in the course of a few years, a complete renovation. Accordingly, the body is periodically transformed into an entirely different being. This is true even though the form and function of the several organs remain the same; for, form and function exist only in and through the subject in which they inhere: they are, therefore, not wholly *the same*, but only very

similar; just as we say that a river, a regiment, etc., remains the same, although the mass of water and the men change. What abides is only the manner of movement, the exterior order and grouping of a plurality of beings that follow one another in continuous change.

Now, notwithstanding this continuous change in my organism, I (and everyone else) am fully conscious that I am the same, numerically the same, as several years ago; that I am not only exteriorly similar to, but absolutely identical with, my personality of the past. Whence, then, does this remembrance of my own identity proceed? Must it be attributed to the components, to the atoms? But these are unstable! Or, is perhaps the correlation of the several parts the cause thereof? This would be the only possible refuge, since the mutual relation at least is permanent. But what is the meaning of a thinking, a reminiscent relation? This is indeed unintelligible language! In fact if we were nought but organism, and this latter were the self-conscious principle, then it should primarily be conscious that it is

continuously changing; at all events, it could not have the contrary consciousness of identity. For what knows itself better, what is more conscious of itself, than self-consciousness? Thus we see how the first and fundamental activity of our *higher life* continually testifies to the existence of a super-organic principle.

Another phenomenon of our mental life is that our thoughts, our judgments are indivisible, simple. The very notion of thought excludes all possibility of its proceeding from matter which has no other functions than motion, perpetual organisation and dissolution of chemical and physical combinations, and continual molecular transposition. These activities are evidently not quite the same as thought and judgment. But, even disregarding this, it must be conceded that our thoughts are essentially indivisible. Try as we will, we shall never be able to discover a composition in our acts of thought. How, indeed, could it be possible to subjectively dissect, *v.g.*, an act of affirmation or of negation? True, our judgment, our thought may be more or less intense; it may be clear

or obscure; but we have either a *whole* thought or none at all. And how should thought be divisible if, as self-observation testifies, it has neither extension nor occupies space? If all this is true, the brain can neither be the principle nor the repository of thought, because if it were, thought should be as composite and divisible as the brain itself.

Not only the thought, but its contents, too, must be simple. Thus, *e.g.*, if I think of the abstract ideas "truth" or "justice," I think something most simple, because these ideas admit of no plurality whatsoever. Now, just as justice itself is neither extended nor local, and a half or a quarter justice is an absurdity; so neither is the concept thereof extended nor local. Hence we ask: Can the brain, a grossly material organ, be the principle of such and like ideas? Does the brain *immediately* confer anything to their formation? By no means! For, in that case, every single particle of the cerebral substance would form this one idea, and I would consequently have as many identical concepts in my brain as there are atoms,

Consciousness, however, tells me that I have not a multitude of ideas, but only one.

On the other hand, the contents of the phantasy, the phantasm, consists of parts, and is just as extended as the sensible object it represents. The phantasm of a tree, *v.g.*, can be divided into trunk, branches, and leaves as easily as the tree itself or its image on the retina of the eye. But I can by no means gain a sensitive representation of simple objects, such as "justice" and "truth." Hence there is no difficulty in assuming the brain as the organ of the phantasy since this forms the phantasm in the brain. Just as the artist makes use of the canvas to produce his picture, so does the phantasy make use of the cerebral atoms for the formation of the phantasm. The same should be the case with thought did it but partially proceed from the brain; a thing shown to be absolutely impossible because of our simple concepts. There must, therefore, necessarily be another simple and inextent principle that is the foundation of thought;[1] a principle that is neither composite nor divisible.

[1] *Cf.* St Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. ii.,

Another psychological fact is that we can reflect on our own thoughts; and we do this quite naturally. Thought reflects upon itself; it is its own mirror. But if thought and self-consciousness were mere functions of matter (molecular motion, change of cerebral substance), we should, at will, immediately perceive the whole chemical process carried on in the brain, nay, the whole interior molecular activity in the central nervous system—since "thought is molecular motion"—should be manifest to us. What a Utopia would the physicians to insane asylums enjoy if this were the case! Alas—for them—the opposite holds good. Our self-consciousness tells us absolutely nothing, and can tell us nothing of those processes. As already remarked, we should never have become aware of the brain's existence had no one been so kind as to enlighten us on that subject, or had we not accidentally seen one. Evidently, then, cerebral activity

c. 49, n. 3, where he justly concludes that if cognition were corporeal (brain) activity, we should necessarily cognise concrete, individual beings only, but should not be able to form *universal ideas*, especially because, as he (St Thomas, 1, q. 85, a. 3) teaches, the universal idea *prius* occurrit intellectui et est *primum* cognitum.

and thought, brain and intellect, body and thinking principle cannot be identical.

A short exposition of the importance of the brain for human cognition may now be expedient to show more clearly that thought, though always accompanied by cerebral motion, cannot possibly be a product of the brain.

The phantasy, which results from the living human brain, produces the phantasms by means of cerebral activity much in the same way that an artist produces his picture through the instrumentality of the brush; with this difference, however, that in the first case instrument and agent are vitally connected.

How, then, is thought effected? We commence once more with facts, the first being that all our cognition originates from reality, from experience; the second, that all our thoughts, even the most abstract, are generally accompanied by a phantasm; the third, that in the mental activity itself the brain does not immediately elicit the act.

Having premised these facts, we can easily deduce therefrom the importance of the brain

for the process of thought. Man receives the first impressions of exterior objects by means of the outer senses. These—if we may use the expression—"telegraph" the impressions to the central nervous system, which, reacting upon itself, brings forth the phantasm. Now, because the unity of our principle of life most intimately connects the intellect with the brain, with the outer and inner senses, the former (intellect) is naturally incited to reproduce, in a manner, homogeneous with itself, *i.e.*, spiritually, all the impressions received in the sensitive faculty, or, in other words, to *think* them. This it does by taking the phantasm as the basis of thought and of all further activity.

Hence the function of the animated brain in the process of thought is precisely this: through the outer senses (*v.g.*, the eye) it furnishes the material, the object, for the intellect's activity. This object, the phantasm, being brought into contact with the power of abstraction, the intellect can manipulate it as a tool, and thus effect the illumination of the phantasm.

Consequently the relation between phan-

tasm and intellect is somewhat similar to that between eye and light: for, just as light mediates between object and eye, so does the phantasm mediate between the outer senses and the spiritual eye, the intellect.

The action of the phantasy is therefore only a condition, an initiative and stimulus to mental activity; and, just as it were wrong to say that light sees, that light *essentially* belongs to the visive faculty; so also would it be false to assert that the brain is essentially necessary for the action of the thinking faculty.

The influence of the brain upon the thinking faculty can also be explained very easily. Mental activity frequently causes fatigue. Whence does this arise? It cannot come from the intellect—this cannot grow weary. It must be ascribed to the brain, which is so overtaxed that the consumed matter cannot be soon enough replaced. Insanity, too, is a cerebral disease, and hence it is but natural that the intellect is hampered in its activity when the phantasy presents blurred pictures only. But let us

return to the positive proof of the dualism in man.

Experience teaches us that all the functions of the body, including those of "organised matter," are subject to the law of necessity. This, again, compels us to reject the materialistic and monistic theories of the soul. For, if thought were an organic activity, it would be impossible for us to influence or change certain opinions and motives unless some exterior agent should determine us to such a proceeding. The cerebral molecular activity is as free from being influenced by the will as are, *v.g.*, the activities of the digestive organs: for, since I do not perceive them, I have no power over them. Just as I am unable to cure my infirmities through a mere act of the will; so also would it be impossible for me to change my opinions. I could have such opinions and such intentions only as corresponded to the material impression on the external sensuous nerves and the brain. Hence, if thought were even partially the effect of cerebral activity, my will could by no means influence my opinions.

Again, if thought were cerebral activity,

truth and the laws of thought would necessarily be as varied as men themselves. In fact, if thought and judgment proceeded immediately from the brain, then its activities would be as diverse as the structure of the human brain. The variety of structure in the human brain, however, is so great and universal—as Materialism specially emphasises —that it would be a wild undertaking to look for two perfectly similar brains. In opposition to this, we have the fixed and unexceptionable fact that the laws of thought are identically the same among all the peoples of the globe. All men of all climes, from the dark inhabitants of Africa to the profoundest scholars of Europe, all observe the same three laws of thought: the law of contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, and the law of sufficient reason.

The most conspicuous evidence of this fact we find in the syllogism, which is at once the most accurate and most logical process of thought, as also the universally acknowledged form of conclusion. Ultimately there is no human being that concludes otherwise, even though the conclusion be drawn uncon-

sciously. True man can be deceived, and one might take as true what another rejects as false. But when once truth is revealed in all its splendour, all men must take the same as true and reject the same as false, and hence have one and the same method of cognition; a thing that cannot be predicated of organic faculties.

Materialism cannot adduce a single word of explanation for this phenomenon: it silences the question to its grave. For us, however, this fact is a clear indication that thought and brain cannot possibly be identical.

What has been said concerning the power of thought, can be said also of the *rational appetite*, the *will*. The limits that circumscribe our volitional life exactly correspond to those that encircle the intellect. Were our will an organic faculty, it would display itself in the same manner as the sensuous appetite through which one man perceives something as a sensitive good what another perceives as a sensitive evil. And still, there is a whole world of spiritual things, each one of which is equally good, equally desirable for

all men! Truth, knowledge, justice, temperance, etc., etc., are in themselves equally good for all: subjectively, indeed, one may strive after them more than another, but this does not detract from their objective value. Moreover, if the will were an organic faculty, how could we desire such things as honour, virtue, equity, and many others that in no way excite the organs or the nervous system? Nevertheless, the will feels itself attracted by them; an attraction which is often more powerful than that exercised by a sensible object. And how can the will be an organic faculty since it has the power of directly counteracting the sensuous stimulus? How often does the will feel an aversion from things that are most agreeable to the sensible nature! How often, on the other hand, does it energetically strive after things from which our lower nature shrinks back in horror!

The most incontrovertible proof, however, that the will is not an organic faculty is found in its *freedom.* Man, unlike the animal, is not bound to instinct; he is not the slave thereof. No, he can act as he wills; no

power can force him, on the contrary; he domineers over the organism, and brings it under subjection. This is, as already remarked, a conspicuous fact; a fact so evident that the materialist who, for the sake of saving his system, denies it, looses all title to consistency. He, too, speaks of law and duty, responsibility and crime: but what is the meaning of these terms if there be no free-will? They stand or fall according as we affirm or deny the freedom of the will.

The will, then, is no more an organic faculty than the intellect. It imperiously demands another, a higher principle in man, a principle that is the source and fountain of volition and desire, a principle that is *free.*

Finally, the materialistic doctrine of the soul is in conflict with a natural law which modern investigation has established as universal; so universal that it admits of no single exception. The contents of this law is that all the faculties of a being, whether a simple atom or a highly organised creature, exist solely *for* this being, and are given it for its *own* natural development, and for the continuation or preservation of *its* species.

This *must* be the case; otherwise we should find ourselves in an endless chaos. A faculty that would not be conducive to the fulfilment of this purpose were superfluous and, in as far as it serves some extraneous end, ruinous. Hence, if man's higher faculties, intellect and will, were powers of the organism, they should exist solely *for* the organism; they should labour exclusively and relentlessly for the development and perfection of the body. The vegetative and sensitive faculties of the animal all tend to this end; even the noblest of animal faculties, the instinct, has no other aim than to foster and preserve animal life, first in the individual, and then also in the species. If, therefore, man's higher faculties were material, their sphere of action should coincide with that of the animal. And is this really the case? By no means. First of all, man's higher faculties can in no way directly or immediately contribute anything toward the development of the organism. The functions of the vegetative organs are hidden from the intellect, nor does the vital connection between the two throw any light on the subject. The will

has no power over vegetative life. Thus are they, from the very outset, impeded in lending assistance to the body. All the combined forces of intellect and will are unable to increase the size of the body even by an inch. Intense and prolonged mental activity are generally rather detrimental than beneficial to the organism: the sturdiest members of the human race are found, not among the learned, those who spend their lives amid intellectual labours; but among the working classes, those who earn their bread by the work of their hands. Such observations show that intellect and will are not primarily given to man *for* the organism; and hence they cannot be said to be powers *of* the organism. They have quite another sphere of action: spiritual goods and spiritual perfections are their proper objects, and hence all their energy is intent upon attaining these. Striving after things that are of no value whatsoever for the organism, intellect and will must be powers of a different principle; a principle of a different nature from the body; a principle that is developed and perfected by spiritual things. This must

be the case, because if the contrary were true, man would be the grossest contradiction in nature; a prodigy whose like the world has not yet seen.

From all these facts which the observation of our "higher life" reveals, we can clearly see that man is a duality; that he is composed of two distinct principles which, though dependent one upon the other, are not identical. Facts and experience, however, must be acknowledged by "exact science." Facts and experience prove that the theory of materialism is not only inexplicable and mysterious, but simply impossible. They prove, furthermore, that the future will make no new revelations in favour of materialism. Thus is the materialistic doctrine of the soul exposed as a science for "non-thinkers."

CHAPTER II

THE HUMAN SOUL CAN EXIST AS AN INDEPENDENT AND SUBSISTENT BEING

"Consider, then, Cebes," said he, "whether, from all that has been said, these conclusions follow, that the soul is most like that which is divine, immortal, intelligent, uniform, indissoluble, and which always continues in the same state."[1]—PLATO, *Phædo*, c. xxviii.

THE necessary conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that man is a duality, consisting of a soul and a body.

Now we ask: What is the nature of man's vital principle, the soul? Is it so constituted that, like the animal soul, it can exist only in and with the body; or can it live also without the body? In other words: Has the soul an existence

[1] Translation by Henry Cary, M.A. Harper Bros., N.Y., 1890.

that is independent so that it can live as a subsistent and independent being?

The only means we have of discovering the essence, the causes of a being is, to deduce them from its effects. This mode of conclusion, viz., from a variety of phenomena to a variety of principles, is one universally acknowledged by naturalists.

From the joint activity of the animal soul we conclude to its nature.

All the actions of the animal soul are dependent on matter. Therefore its existence, too, depends on matter.

The several vital functions of the animal are limited to vegetation and sensation; but these are activities necessarily performed by a material organ. Therefore, since the animal soul can operate only in conjunction with matter, it is a material principle, and can exist in matter only.

Such argumentation calls forth a veritable storm of indignation on the part of certain materialistic philosophers who assert that "the animal kingdom, not only in its physical, but also in its *intellectual* and *moral*, being, is a decomposed man; that there is only a difference

in degree, but not in kind, between the animal and the human soul."[1] As a proof for this equalisation of animal and human soul, they—*v.g.*, Strauss and v. Hartmann—have chosen the higher mammals, especially dogs and apes.

These animals are undoubtedly intelligent, for they frequently act very rationally and deliberately; they are very well acquainted with man, and enter into his designs; experience makes them proficient, and this shows that they perceive the *nexus causalis;* they are often pensive, and seem to be engaged in deep meditation; they are susceptible of development, and can therefore gradually increase their knowledge. The animal has also self-consciousness; it has a very high degree of self-esteem, and is proud of its "personal" accomplishments. The male bird, when deliberately exhibiting his magnificent plumage, and breaking forth in melodious strains, is a striking example of the animal's æsthetic sense. Its free-will is displayed when, in perplexing circumstances, it evidently

[1] Büchner, *Das künftige Leben und die moderne Wissenschaft*, 2nd ed., p. 100.

deliberates and prudently determines its course of action. Nor is language wanting: animals understand each other remarkably well; many of them, *v.g.*, the apes, elicit monitory cries that are comprehended by the whole band of monkeys. The dog gives evidence of his delight—at least with his tail; a more subtile development of the vocal organ would naturally effect a more perfect language. And the animals are by no means insusceptible of moral sense and moral qualities, *e.g.*, the sense of duty, gratitude, affection, and honour, all of which come to light when we pet or punish them.

These objections have been so often refuted that we shall satisfy ourselves with adducing some few but weighty counter-objections.

There can be no doubt that all the alleged and allegeable phenomena can be explained without the assumption of an immaterial (spiritual) principle. They originate from instinct and sensitive life. Thus, *e.g.*, the utmost expediency found even in plants and inorganic nature. All this is possible, even though the agent knows nothing of the

"wisdom" of his action. Undoubtedly the animal acquires, through experience, a certain proficiency; for, when it sees the whip it fears punishment; and if the dog is punished for his awkwardness, he will not, on the next hunting expedition, allow the game to escape. Evidently the animal need not know the relation between cause and effect in these cases; the sensitive memory and the instinct, both of which the animals possess, suffice to explain its action. Kant rightly says: "The ox has a definite representation of his stable, and consequently also of the door of his stable; he combines both [it would be more correct to say, they are naturally combined], but he does not arrive at the conclusion: this door belongs to this stable." The so-called æsthetic sense of birds has been relegated to the spheres of sexual instinct. The most "intelligent" dog has never been seen to admire the most marvellous of nature's scenery. He will, at most, sniffle around in the air, not, however, with the intention of enjoying the scene.

The "free-will" of animals is always found to be the necessary reaction of an impression

on the nervous system. The animal, like man, has external and internal perception, and it instinctively uses these to discover what is for its weal and what for its woe. But perception is necessarily followed by appetency. If not, why does the animal always act in the same way under the same or similar circumstances? Concerning the sense of duty, *e.g.*, of the dog, well, that is, for the greater part, begotten of whip and fodder, and can hardly be considered a "moral" quality. The fact that the animal is affectionate, likes to be petted, etc., does not postulate spiritual faculties. We must not forget that the animal is not an automaton; it has real, sensitive perception, and hence also sensitive likings or inclinations such as affection for its master and benefactor.

Thus, without assuming intelligence, *can* all the above-mentioned phenomena find their explanation in the animal's sensitive nature; and thus *must* they be explained.

We shall set forth only a few of the principal reasons for this.

It strikes us first of all that were we to

ascribe all those animal activities to a rational principle, man of all living beings would be the greatest simpleton. For, not only the higher mammals, but all the animals, even the lowest, act with a deliberation, knowledge, and prudence which by far surpass the same qualities in man. The ant, the bee, countless worms, insects, and birds set about the building of their nests and the gathering of their means of sustenance with an expediency which, were it conscious, would portray so keen a knowledge of the laws of nature, mathematical proportions, and future possibilities that the knowledge of the wisest of men were very scant in comparison with it. Hence there can be but one of two alternatives: either, we must hold that the actions of the animal are performed unconsciously, and that they are not the result of reasoning; or, we must ascribe to them an intellect by far more subtile than ours.

All animal "intelligence" is inborn. The young ape, the new-born ant, in fact every youthful individual of the animal kingdom is just as "intelligent," and just as clever, as its forbears, and acts in exactly the same

way. This is a cogent proof that all their actions are instinctive. We must "learn" to perform our duties, and if the animals were what we are, rational creatures, then they should, perforce, pass through the same school. Did the animal act consciously and freely, it should at some time in the course of centuries have dawned, *e.g.*, upon an ape to change his condition of life, and to make at least some little improvement on the manners and customs of his ancestors. But such a thing never has happened, and never will happen. In fact progress, as we find it in the human race, is nowhere to be found in the animal kingdom. Throughout the course of its life, the animal "learns" nothing, and it is as "intelligent" at the end of its days as when it first saw light. As is the case with the individual, so also with the whole race: from age to age an everlasting monotony and uniformity. This is their law, their curse we should say, if they had "intelligence." They build their habitations, foster their young, and gather their food in the same way to-day as they did in the paleolithic period. Not even the most "intelligent"

race of monkeys has, in the long period of its existence, increased by a whit its "intellectual acquirements"; a proof that it has no intellect at all.

Nor can the hand of man effect real progress in the animal world. The animal is susceptible of *training;* but it is absolutely inaccessible to *education.* A dog can be trained to perform many tricks; no wonder, for the performance of these tricks does not postulate reason and free-will Sense-perception, sensitive appetite, memory, fear of punishment, and love of fodder are the only requisites. Man will never succeed in training real knowledge into a dog. Training is not education, it is not learnt and understood; it is simply practised, and is confined to the narrow limits of instinct, which it never transgresses even by an inch. All this points to the contrary of freedom and reason, viz.—to *unconscious necessity* in each and every action.

Finally, if the animal had intellect, it should exhibit this, at least in such cases where very little of it is required, and where there is question of life or death. But we

find absolutely no traces of reason as may be seen, *v.g.*, in the bear who hugged a hot tea-kettle until it scalded him to death. Just as irrationally all animals act in circumstances where the least bit of reason would help them out of a difficulty. Clever though they be within the spheres of instinct, their folly is so unlimited as soon as they are beyond those spheres that they often do things that hurry them to destruction.

Notwithstanding all this, we must allow that there is "wisdom" in the animal,—passive wisdom. Animals do not determine themselves, but are determined to, and driven into, a closely circumscribed sphere of action. Hence they do not think for themselves; another has thought for them, and in His wisdom has so constituted them. The activity of the animal, therefore, betrays intelligence; however, not that of the animal, but of the personal Creator; a wisdom without measure and without number. Indeed, we men often designate animal activities with expressions borrowed from our own life; and how could we otherwise, since we can hardly picture to ourselves an ape- or a

dog-soul? Moreover, there is an essential similarity between the animal's sensuous life and ours; and a certain analogy between the animal's sensuous, and our intellectual, life.

Just because all its intelligence is purely passive, the animal has no language. We men do not think because we speak; but we speak because we think. The animal is dumb because it has nothing to talk about; and it has nothing to talk about because it has no thought it would like to express. The parrot is not in need of an organ of speech, and still he has not, as yet, progressed so far as to form the simplest sentence; he is merely a mimic. And why that? Well, he does not speak *out* of himself because he has no thought *in* himself; a word is a thought expressed. Naturalists could so easily satisfy their hearts' desire, and convince the world of animal intelligence; and hence show the identity between man and animal, as well as the impossibility of immortality, did they but "educate" a *single* monkey so far as only *once*, with newspaper in hand, to give in *one* single sentence his

opinion about the latest attempts at colonisation in Africa: or, easier still, if he, pointing at himself, but once *freely* speak *out of himself* the *single* self-conscious word: *Ego.*

The animal soul, therefore, displays not even one inorganic activity; not one power that is not immediately dependent on the body. Hence we conclude that the animal soul has no existence independent of the body or the material substance. True, the soul is an essential constituent of the animal, but it is by no means a subsistent and independent entity, because the purpose of its existence terminates in the development of the organism and the production of other beings of its kind.

The human principle of life, the rational soul, presents an entirely different aspect. We have already seen that the higher rational activities are performed, not partially, but *wholly and solely*, in the soul through its faculties. The proofs of this we have found in self-consciousness; in the organism's inability of assisting in the production of simple and universal ideas; in the inadmissibility of reducing thought and volition to

mere organic activity; and above all, in the freedom of the will with whose fertile and multiform activity the organism has no more to do than to offer the exterior condition for action.

Now, there is an axiom which reads: *Actio sequitur esse.* This is, after all, nothing else than the principle of perfect harmony and conformity between properties and faculties on the one hand and the nature and essence of a being on the other—a principle that obtains throughout the universe, and is confirmed by experience and observation. If, therefore, there is a being which has an activity that proceeds solely from itself without any dependence on matter, then this being is independent from matter in its existence also—it is a subsistent being. But since in the rational soul we find a number of activities that do not proceed from organic faculties, and are essentially independent from the organism, we can justly conclude that our soul has a subsistent and independent existence. (Whether or no the soul exercises these activities after its separation from the body does not concern us at present.)

Therefore the human soul having actions essentially its own, it has also an existence of its own.

The soul is furthermore a *simple* being. We have simple ideas, *e.g.*, the idea of simplicity and of equality; and we have simple intellectual acts, *e.g.*, acts of affirmation and of negation. But these ideas and acts presuppose a simple faculty. For that is simple which is indivisible. But everything found in a compound, divisible faculty is itself divisible. Intellect, therefore, is a simple faculty. Such a faculty, however, can be found in a simple substance only. Hence the soul is a simple substance, and has no physical constituents.

The same is demonstrated by the following consideration. If the human soul were really composed of physical parts, it could not react on its own activities, and perceive the connection between itself, the source of this activity, and the elicited act. In such a reflex action the perceiving principle and the thing perceived are perfectly identical, and hence a simple faculty only can elicit such an act. Should we hold that the several

parts of a physically constituted faculty reacted on themselves or on other parts, we should never obtain as a result *uniform* consciousness and the identity between perceiver and perceived, because in that case only three things could be possible: (*a*) either every single part would perceive only itself, or (*b*) only the other parts, or (*c*) itself and the other parts.

If each part perceived itself only, the whole as such could never perceive itself as a unity. And if every part perceived only the other parts, the identity between perceiver and perceived could not be attained. Lastly, if every part perceived itself *and* the other parts, the perceiving part and the perceived whole could again not be identical.

As our soul has no integrant parts, so neither does it consist of essential parts. The soul being the ultimate ground of life in the living being, has the same relation to the body as the life-giving principle and directrix has to the viable and directed. Hence, if the soul contained two essential parts, then (*a*) either both would be life-giving and directing principles, or (*b*) the one

would be the active and directing, and the other the passive and viable.

In the first case, both parts would, in themselves, be souls, and man be not *one* rational creature but two. In the second case, one of the two parts would not be soul, but body. Then the other essential part would be the soul proper. Therefore our soul cannot consist of essential parts.

But, it may be objected, the same soul that is the principle of our higher, intellectual life is at the same time the basis of our vegetative and sensitive life, and in this respect our soul, like that of the animal, is wholly dependent on the organism. According to the above axiom, therefore, our soul should be as dependent as that of the animal.

This conclusion is unjustifiable. We can conclude from a dependent activity to a dependent nature only in the event that there are none but dependent actions; but we cannot draw such a conclusion if, besides dependent, there are *at the same time* independent activities, because a higher (independent) being can, under circumstances,

perform the same functions as a lower (dependent) one; but not contrariwise. Consequently, an independent being can perform dependent actions; a dependent being, however, is unfit for independent activity. The fact in the present instance is, that the body is much more dependent on the soul than the soul on the body. The latter is rather the passive, the former the active, element, and hence it would be much more correct to say: The soul—of its own power—uses the organism for the performance of vegetative and sensitive functions, thus raising it to a higher plane of action. Though this relation does not necessarily presuppose an independent being, at all events it does not contradict independence. Surely no one would say that the lower, dependent, vital functions rob the soul of its independence; a quality which its higher life categorically demands.

But why is this independent soul joined with the body and thus made to form one being, man? And, if the soul is complete and perfect in itself, why does it stand in need of perfection through the organism,

which, by means of the essential union that exists between them, helps the soul to unfold its consummate vital activity?

Man is indeed a corporeo-spiritual being; body and soul must be essentially united in order to constitute him. If there were no essential union between these two constituents, man should be two beings. In contradiction to this, self-consciousness tells us that we are a unit, and that the body belongs to our one *Ego.* Nor does this union come into conflict with the independent nature of the soul. The body, or rather the numberless atoms that make up the body, are entities that require for their higher existence, for life, a union with the soul. They are one with the soul as the soul is one with them, in as much as for the time being they forfeit their *state* of independence, but not their independent *nature;* when they separate from the organism they re-acquire their proper inorganic independence. Evidently, independent nature and essential union into one new whole is no contradiction. The former only means to say that the union of one being with another is not absolutely

necessary for its existence; not that a union should be impossible, nor that an independent being must necessarily be always in a *state* of independence, as is seen in the constituents of the organism.

Again, it were wrong to say that the soul exists only *through* the body or through the union with it. No, it exists *with* the body, and not through it. On the other hand, the living organism as such exists through the soul in as far as the latter allows the body to share its independent life.

Precisely the essential union affords us an explanation of the great influence the body exercises over the soul. The latter is in a state of dependence on the body, and forms one being with it. No wonder, then, that the soul must share the body's debilities.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that it is *one* soul which performs a threefold activity: one for itself, the other two for the body, with which it is one being. It is the same soul that dwells upon its thoughts, and is at the same time the vital principle of the body, and as such regulates the circulation of the blood, and feels pleasure and pain through

the excitation of the nervous system. It is absolutely inconceivable that in its higher life the soul should not be affected by the disorders in the lower life; that the structure and condition of the organs, especially of the brain, should not, in a great measure, influence the intellectual and volitional life of man.

Evidently, then, the soul's union with, and its dependence on, the body offer no serious grounds for objecting against its subsistent nature.

There is one thing that might still be surprising. We have seen that everyone has more or less the consciousness of his own soul: why then are we not conscious also of its independence and subsistence, and thus be saved the trouble of proving it? We are indeed conscious of our soul, but not in such a manner as to *immediately* cognise its nature; we perceive it through the inner observation of its higher functions, whose basis and source it is. But every activity being more or less dependent, can lead us only indirectly and imperfectly to the independence of its source. Moreover, we

perceive our soul, as everything else, through phantasms, which cast themselves like veils between our knowledge and the spiritual object thereof. After the soul is separated from the body, it will have a much more perfect knowledge of itself, and be as clearly conscious of its independence as the whole man is conscious of it in the present state. Furthermore, in this life the soul is continually dependent on the body, and hence the consciousness of its independence is more or less lost to view. Nevertheless, it would not be right to think that we have no consciousness whatever of our independence. We know and are conscious, even though vaguely, of the soul's pre-eminence over our whole being, and this includes, in a certain measure, the consciousness of its independence. For, if, like the animal soul, it depended on the organism for its existence, it should, like that, be material.

Thus man is really a microcosm. He includes in himself all the forms of life and of action, and is impressed with the stamp of the highest perfection. In the vegetable kingdom the principle of life is indissolubly

bound up with the organism, and is nothing more than an organising, a plastic form of life that rules and guides the powers of matter in the formation of the plant. The animal principle of life absorbs this vegetative activity, and adds thereto a more perfect form, that of sense-perception and appetition, through which it is not, like the plant, confined to itself, but transcending self draws into its sphere of action the sensibly perceptible. The purpose of this form of life is not only the development, but also the well-being, of the organism: but, like that of the plants, it is bound to matter, and stands or falls with the organism, because the sole purpose of its existence is the weal of that same organism. Man takes up both these forms of life, but only in so far as they are the basis of a higher, independent form; accordingly, the former are subject to the latter. Man's one spiritual soul has, over and above its functions as a vegetative and sensitive vital principle, a life suitable to its higher independent nature: a life of thought and volition, of the cognition of truth and aspiration to things spiritual, the self-conscious life

of freedom. This life, the proper supersensible well-being of the soul, is the most sublime purpose of man's existence: the development and well-being of the organism is secondary.[1] Therefore, the human soul is, as we shall see, a principle of life that does not live and die with the organism, but actually abides even after the latter has departed from the realm of the living.

[1] Hence St Thomas speaking of the human principle of life, says :—Non est *totaliter comprehensum* a materia aut ei *immersum*, sicut aliæ formæ materiales quod eius operatio intellectiva ostendit (*Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. ii., c. 68).

CHAPTER III

THE HUMAN SOUL REALLY CONTINUES TO EXIST AFTER ITS SEPARATION FROM THE BODY

"Do we think that death is anything? Is it anything else than the separation of the soul from the body? And is not this to die, for the body to be apart by itself, separated from the soul, and for the soul to subsist apart by itself, separated from the body? Is death anything else than this?"—PLATO, *Phædo*, c. ix.

A BEING is said to be imperishable if it does not contain within itself a principle of dissolution. In other words: that being is imperishable which is of such a nature as through itself ever to remain the same and abide in existence. Such a condition is also called immutability.

Now, is the human soul actually immutable? Experience teaches that, like the rest of material creation the human body is subject to death and corruption. This passing

away and cessation of the material world is founded on decomposition and dissolution. The human body, *e.g.*, consists of countless atomic combinations; in death these are dissolved. Man himself, consisting of two distinct parts, soul and body, is also subject to death. A simple living being, a being that has no parts, is not subject to death in this sense of dissolution; it can, at most, be annihilated. But our soul is such a simple being.

The human soul consists, as already demonstrated, neither of combined elements nor of a vivifying and vivified principle; it is neither extended nor limited to space: it is a single, essentially, and quantitatively simple being. The proofs for this statement we found in self-consciousness, the simplicity of the thoughts and ideas which form the interior intellectual life of the soul. This simple being is intrinsically exempt from death; nor is it like the body or the whole man subject to dissolution. The soul has no distinct mutually conflicting elements that might destroy the whole; it is not a composite whole, but a unitary, most simple

being. Hence dissolution, as we find it round about us in, *e.g.*, chemical decomposition, cannot affect our principle of life. But can it perhaps be changed into another being? Neither this: for change is effected by the abiding of one thing and the departure of another, which latter is replaced by something else. If this were not the case, we should not have a change of the first being but a total annihilation thereof and a creation of something new. Change, therefore, presupposes parts, or at least divisibility, and is consequently impossible in a simple being such as the soul.

Thus we see that the soul is of its very nature imperishable, immortal: it does not contain within itself the germ, not even the possibility, of death. Modern science has no right whatever to object to this proof. Does it not boast of having discovered the eternity of matter? And does it not say that experience has proven this to a demonstration? "The atom (primitive atom) is simple and hence indissoluble and unchangeable." This is the fundamental principle of its gospel. Why, then, object if we apply this principle?

Is the soul also immune to destruction by *external* causes?

From this point of view the soul might be considered as perishable through the *powers of nature*, to whose vandalic force all the visible creation succumbs. But nature is not powerful enough to destroy the soul. Nature can destroy in as far as it effects chemical and physical changes; but chemical and physical changes cannot affect the soul which is immaterial, simple. If natural science finds in the simplicity of the ultimate constituents of matter (atoms and primitive atoms) the cause of their indestructibility, we have still greater reasons for applying the same principle to the soul which does not properly belong to the spheres of this visible, tangible world. The powers of nature that can, in the course of time, bring the Egyptian pyramids to dust, can exercise no destructive influence on the soul. It is as impossible for them to harm the human soul as it is for us to catch up a handful of sun-rays. This much they can do—they can drive the soul out of the body. Nay, properly speaking, they cannot even do this;

for the agony and pangs of the last moments of mortal life are not an attack of nature on the soul itself but on the body, which, after having been rendered useless as a habitation, is relinquished by the soul. The latter, therefore, is not driven out, but it sorrowfully extricates itself from the body which served as its temple and with which it formed one being. Now, if death itself cannot destroy the soul, how much more is it secure when it shall have departed this world "that gives and takes, and chops and changes every minute," and when all the sufferings of this earthly life which the soul must share with the body shall be no more.

But could not the body with which the soul is so intimately wedded, bring about its destruction? We might suppose the same case as with the animal soul which originates, develops, and perishes with the body. Could not the human soul cease to exist by being extinguished like a light, or by vanishing like smoke, as soon as the body perishes? This would not be dissolution but simply cessation.

The answer to this difficulty is already

contained in the foregoing exposition. The animal soul—howsoever it may have originated from matter—must necessarily cease to exist with the destruction of the organism. Why that? The animal soul has *none but organic* activities, and hence none but a corporeal material existence. But if the existence of the animal soul is wholly immersed in matter, it cannot exist after the destruction of the body. Hence if the organism is essentially injured, the soul becomes unfit for life, because it has only an organic existence, and because all its vital activity was possible only in and through the organs. A continued existence, therefore, would be to no purpose. For the disembodied animal soul could no longer act, and would be incapable of perceiving its object, which is the sensible, and which cannot be perceived without nervous excitation. Moreover, without the organism, the animal soul has forfeited its natural destiny, because it acts for no other purpose than for the development, preservation, and welfare of the body.

When there is question of the human soul the contrary of all this is true. Whereas

the animal principle of life can live only in conjunction with the body, the soul of man is an independent being which, though capable of greater perfection by the body with regard to the lower functions, is not absolutely in need of the body, and can just as well exist without it. The soul's existence never did depend on the body; it was only in a temporary *state* of dependence on the organism; this it relinquishes in death. Though the state of the soul is changed after death, its intrinsic *existence* and *nature* is not in the least affected. It abides, therefore, just as well as the matter, the atom, that separates itself from the mouldering corpse.

Besides, the soul has superorganic faculties and functions, viz., the higher intellectual and volitional life, which are compatible with its independent nature, and remain with it even after the separation from the body. In fact, these faculties never were *in* the body, nor were they powers *of* the body; they never, even partially, operated *in* or *through* an organ, but they originated from the soul alone, and are necessarily in it alone.

The one great difference between soul and

body is that the latter has no life *of* itself, and must, therefore, in order to be alive, be vivified by the soul. It is vivified and has vital functions, but it has not life nor the principle and cause thereof. This is only in the soul, which has life *in* itself and vital power *through* itself. It is not vivified, but living and animating: as matter is of itself dead, so is the soul of itself living.

But perhaps the soul loses the *exercise* of its faculties in as far as their activities are made ineffectual? Neither this. For such a thing could only happen either because the soul has *no object* for the faculties, or because it cannot *attain* its object in the disjunct state. Neither of these is possible. The disembodied soul finds in the other world the proper object of its higher life, which was, even during its stay in the body, not the sensible, the material, but everything that the intellect can perceive as true and the will desire as spiritual good. The essences, especially those of material things, which are even in this life the proper objects of the soul, remain in it; immaterial things, *e.g.*, its own nature, shall also be its object.

The soul can of itself conclude to God, make use of the pictures stowed away in the spiritual phantasy, and consequently elicit volitional acts of love, etc., etc. Finally, the soul can, in its disjunct state, *attain* these objects with its faculties. Though the present union with the senses is a natural one, it is nevertheless merely external and temporary; but by no means essentially necessary.

Lastly, the soul has also an adequate end or purpose of existence. This end was not, even while soul and body were united, the welfare and development of the organism; but rather the intrinsic welfare and perfection of the soul itself.

After the separation of the soul from the body, the former exists by itself as an independent and subsistent being. It is, therefore, very erroneous to suppose that after death the soul has neither self-consciousness nor a proper personal life; that in itself it is nothing substantial, nothing real, and that therefore a "pure soul-existence" is an impossibility.[1]

[1] Thus Strauss. Lipsius, however, believes that Hegel

This is, after all, nothing more than the current error according to which everything that is intangible is considered unreal. Why, the soul is even much more real, much more substantial, than the body, precisely because the soul has by far a more perfect being, is much more similar to the most perfect and most real of all beings, God. As even now the soul's *self-conscious* life proceeds exclusively from itself, so is it impossible that it should lose self-consciousness through death. Then it is evidently conscious also that the body no longer belongs to its *ego*.[1] Justly, there-

has proven "that the presupposed abstract simplicity of the soul's substance is irreconcilable with real life," and that therefore "a pure soul-existence is a contradictory imagination." (Lipsius, *Lehrbuch der evang. protest. Dogmatic*, 2nd ed., p. 858.) Undoubtedly an *abstract* simplicity is irreconcilable with *real* life. Hegel might have saved himself the trouble of proving this. But a man with common-sense would never have "presupposed" it; he would have assumed a very *concrete* and *real* simplicity which can be so easily reconciled with life that the highest being, which includes in itself the most real life, can be imagined only as the absolutely most simple being.

[1] With many Christian philosophers we might, nevertheless, ask the question, whether the disembodied soul is to be called a person (*persona*). At all events it is no longer a *human*, i.e., *corporeo-spiritual*, personality. Still,

fore, does the dying Cyrus conclude: "I could never be persuaded that souls, while they were in mortal bodies, *lived*, but when they departed them, *perished*."

It might still be urged that, after all we have said, it is difficult to understand an unobstructed higher life of the soul in that disjunct state, especially since we laid so much stress on the fact that the intellectual life of the soul ever and anon depends on the co-operation of phantasm, and hence of cerebral activity. Though this be a purely *external* co-operation, a mere condition, it is nevertheless an absolutely necessary condition; without which thought seems to be as impossible as a telegram without a telegraph. But if the pure soul is unable to conceive even a single thought, there can be no question of a life of the soul, and hence neither of a soul-existence after death.

We answer this difficulty with the following facts. The observation of nature shows

the note person, *i.e.*, a rational, subsistent being, seems to be applicable also to the soul (even though it be capable of greater perfection with regard to its personality—subsistence). The whole question is, however, rather a *lis de verbo*, and of no consequence for our argumentation.

us that every activity is proportionate not only to the nature of the agent, but also to the actual *state*, into which this agent is placed. Thus, *e.g.*, matter has different functions in the organism than outside of it. In the first instance, it can feel and suffer pain, neither of which it can do by itself. The caterpillar, the pupa, and the butterfly, the same animal in the three distinct stages of its development, leads, in each of these, a different kind of life, has different instincts and different means of sustenance inasmuch as the faculties and functions adopt themselves to the natural state of the animal. It is evident that this must be so: and naturalists have so highly developed their "theory of accommodation" from these facts that they claim to be able to account for very elementary differentiations in the animal kingdom.

It were, therefore, simply absurd to make the soul an only exception to this universal and necessary law. As long as the soul forms one being with the body, it naturally has a vital activity adapted to this union: and since its being is in a state of dependence,

its thought, too, depends on the body : cerebral activity is a necessary condition for spiritual activity, because the soul perceives the spiritual in a material way. But as soon as the soul is separated from the body, it is in an entirely different state, even though its being remains unchanged. Its activity, therefore, *must* adapt itself to the new state. As the soul no longer exists in a state of dependence on the body, its activity is no longer dependent on matter, and its higher life is absolutely free from all material conditions. Its ideas are no longer dependent on sensible representations ; it has simply pure thoughts through which it sees truth as it is in itself, and not as viewed through the sensible. Hence it no longer requires phantasms, and the will performs its activity without any admixture of nervous excitation.

The dying Cyrus, therefore, has spoken a truly philosophical word when he said : "I could never believe that the soul became senseless after its escape from the senseless body ; it was my conviction that when freed from all relation with the body, and being pure and unadulterated, it came into the

possession of wisdom.[1] Indeed wisdom and knowledge are not in our "senseless bodies": and the "freed" soul has the further advantage of no longer being led astray by the delusions of the phantasy, and of no longer being hampered in its spiritual activities by the fatigue and disease of the brain.

But there is still another objection. The body is undoubtedly the *natural* companion of the soul, and the union between them harmonises with the soul's nature; hence the state of separation is unnatural or at least imperfect, one that we cannot at all imagine. But no being can be destined to live for ever in an unnatural state. If, therefore, we do not wish to maintain that the resurrection of the body is a postulate of nature—and that would indeed be too much—we must relinquish the conviction of the soul's continued existence beyond the grave.

Cicero already spoke of people to whom "the immortality of the soul seems incredible because they cannot conceive what kind of a thing the soul can be when freed from the body." "Just as if," he pertinently answers,

[1] Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. xxii.

"they could really form a correct idea as to what kind of a thing it is even while in the body; what its form, size, and location are. . . . This should be pondered by those who say that they are unable to conceive a soul without a body; they will then see whether they can conceive it when it is in the body. As for myself, when I reflect on the nature of the soul, it seems to me by far more difficult and obscure to determine its character while it is in the body, a strange domicile; than to imagine what it is when it leaves it, and has arrived in the empyreal regions, in its own and proper home."[1]

Now, we know very well *that* the soul is united with the body; but of the *how* we know very little. There can be no doubt that the union with the body is natural for the soul; but from this does not follow that the existence of the soul without the body is unnatural. One and the same being can actually have several natural modes of existence, as may be seen both in living and in dead matter, in the several metamorphoses of animals, *e.g.*, caterpillar, pupa, and butterfly.

[1] *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. xxii.

Each of these stages is natural to the animal, because in each it has a perfectly adapted sphere of life and action, even though not each can be final. Now, since the soul is an independent being, it, too, can pass through several stages; the stage in the hereafter is natural to it, because there, too, it finds an adapted activity and sphere of life, viz., the higher, pure psychologic life that consists in the fruition of the true and the good, which, like itself, are imperishable. "As it is natural," says a great genius, "to the soul that stands on the brink of the world of spirits and the world of sense to look downward with regard to truth; so also is it natural to the soul to gaze on high when it shall have arrived in the spirit-world.

Still there can be no doubt that the union with the body is a more perfect state for the soul, in as far as it can in this state perform *each and every* of its vital functions. Notwithstanding, the state of separation is by no means unnatural nor imperfect in the sense of awaiting its *necessary* perfection. For the soul has all the vital power and all the vital activity of which it is in need. But since it

is more compatible with the nature of things that in its immortality the soul should attain also *complete* perfection, the reunion of soul and body, which could, indeed, be effected only by an immediate interference on the part of the Creator, is not, even from a rational standpoint, altogether improbable. In fact, what should prevent God from such a course of procedure; and who could find anything unnatural in this, especially since we are dealing with a creature that is in a peculiar juxtaposition between the visible and the invisible world, one—as we shall see later on—that finds its perfection and quiescence in the Creator, and is therefore naturally brought to this its ultimate perfection, not through the powers of nature like other creatures, but through the *immediate interference* of its maker. Materialism is, indeed, struck with terror at the idea of any interference between Creator and creature: but this is nothing more than a godless and vain fear of the Supreme Being, which is, from a scientific standpoint, the most fundamental negation of the principle of causality. Whether now the Creator will reunite with the

soul its former body, or whether He will give it another, stands entirely with His pleasure. At all events the resurrection of the dead is neither a necessary consequence of the soul's immortality nor a postulate of nature. Should the organism be the same, it could only be so according to its *essence*, and not according to its *state*. For a body that would be susceptible of pain and subject to death, is incapable of life in immortality. A kind of glorified body, such as mentioned in Holy Writ,[1] would therefore be absolutely necessary.

Death of any kind is, therefore, impossible for the soul. It does not contain within itself a principle of dissolution; the separation from the body cannot make it cease to exist; nor can any external power cause its destruction. The last agony, the deadly combat, is not the *soul's* struggle for existence, nor is it a battle for its own intrinsic life: it is a struggle for the vivification of the body. With all its energy the soul strives to remain in the body; it battles, so to say, for every inch of its property, but must

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 44.

finally relinquish its own, not because *it* has grown old and feeble, but because the organism is no longer fit for life.

Death shall not lord it over the soul; but neither *annihilation.* Strictly speaking, even a simple, subsistent being might be annihilated. But what power should bring the soul to nought? A natural power is entirely out of the question. We find in the whole universe an everlasting dying, but never, as yet, have we witnessed a single instance of annihilation. Hence we can justly conclude: Annihilation of the soul through the powers of nature is an impossibility. The chemical and physical powers can compose and decompose; they can, *e.g.*, make a tree wither away, lose its leaves, rot from crown to root. But in all these processes no mite of matter, no atom, is lost, and hence we see decomposition, not annihilation. Water, whether it evaporate in the air; whether it freeze into ice, or whether, in the grape, it be boiled by the rays of the sun, ever remains the same water, just as much and just as little in one form as in another. There was not a single drop of

water that concurred to replenish the oceans in the first days of creation, which does not exist to-day. Millions of times has it migrated from the tranquil surface of the ocean to the vapoury mantle of the sky, from which it fell and alighted on the summit of a snow-capped mountain. Hence it was driven over hill and dale, through forest and meadow, and finally back into the arms of Neptune. Never in all these wanderings has it gone astray: no, not a single drop of all that indefinite number. A particle of iron may enter into combination with sulphur and form sulphurate of iron; it may then liberate itself, and with oxygen form red iron ore; it may, in the meteorolite, fly through the universe; in the wheel of the "iron horse" dash along the rails; it may circulate in the arteries of the student: it ever remains the self-same particle in all these diverse forms. And when once the human body "lies mouldering in the grave," and the several constituent substances are resolved, not an atom is lost: everything remains, and enters new and ever new combinations. Thus, if the weight of the uni-

verse on the first day of creation were compared with its weight to-day, it would be found to be identical.

And not only matter, but force, too, is inamissible. It is one of the most important discoveries of modern physicists to have found the law of the conservation of energy, according to which, *e.g.*, the efficient motive power in the motion of a body is changed into a perfectly correlative amount of heat; heat, then, is changed into steam, and at the end of these processes it is found that not a fraction of the original amount of energy is lost. The renowned English physicist, Tyndall, is, therefore, right when he says that everywhere there is change, but nowhere annihilation.

Even the end of the animal soul is not annihilation; just as little as its beginning was creation. Since the animal's vital principle has no *being* of its own, but exists only in and through the organism, it neither *originates* nor *ceases* by itself, but does both in conjunction with the body. As we cannot predicate, *v.g.*, of a thought or a figure, that it originated from nothing, and will return to

nothing, so neither can we predicate this of the animal soul. It is conceived in, and produced by, the organism; but this is not creation, but transmutation: and with the death of the animal its soul does not become simply nothing, but the organism with which it formed one being becomes lifeless, which again is transmutation.

Annihilation and creation, *i.e.*, the production of a thing out of nothing, and the reduction into nothing are two parallel acts, equally powerful, great, and transcending all the powers of nature. In fact, annihilation is much more inexplicable than creation, because the most fundamental tendency of nature is the preservation of all life. If, therefore, all the consummate power of Death can annihilate not even a single atom of the human body, but can only separate one atom from the other, how much less will it be able to annihilate the soul!

Hence, whenever there is question of annihilation, the same must be referred to Him who alone can create and annihilate—to God. Doubtless God has the power to annihilate the soul; it would only be

necessary for Him to withdraw His preservative action. But He cannot do so because of His absolute moral perfection; because of His divine wisdom and infinite *consequence* in all His works. As already remarked, we find in the whole natural order no single example of annihilation through the agency of the Creator. "God," we must remember, "is the God of the living," who, according to Holy Scripture, "created all things that they might be."[1]

As the history of all natural beings teaches, God never withdraws His active influence even from a single creature, thus hindering it from attaining its perfection. If they pass away prematurely, this is invariably due either to the internal principles of dissolution, or to the external, destructive influences of nature: always, therefore, to created powers, never to the Creator.

But if this is true with regard to matter and compound material natures that actually form a whole world of everlasting change and transition, how much more is it true with regard to the human soul! We are

[1] Wisd. i. 14.

perfectly justified in concluding from the solidity of a structure created by the hand of man to the durability he intended to give it. A cathedral, *v.g.*, built of massive rock is not destined to stand for a few days, but it should outlast many generations. Well, such a piece of work, such a massive structure, is the human soul: the Creator destined it to last for all eternity. This *design of the Creator* is clearly manifested in the soul's nature. He created it a being of absolute solidity and duration since neither an internal nor an external agent can destroy it. And God Himself will never annihilate the soul; this is a postulate of His divine consequence, otherwise He would not have given it an existence which, more especially after the death of the body, is immune to all change and corruption.

But by far more important than all this is the fact that God created the soul a spirit, and hence a being whose proper sphere can only be an immortal, everlasting life in the enjoyment of the greatest possible spiritual perfection.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUMAN SOUL IS A SPIRIT

"I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with death;

"Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

"Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things."

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*, CXX.

DAVID FREDERICK STRAUSS establishes as "fundamental principle of modern natural sciences" the sentence: "There is nothing incorporeal, excepting that which does not exist"; spirits, therefore, are "not real but fictitious beings."

In fact this is more or less the avowed principle of many modern naturalists.[1] Most of these men who are continually busied with matter, and have a care for none but the sensible and tangible phenomena, see nothing or very little of that world of spirits that continually dogs the footsteps of the historian, the lawyer, the poet, the artisan, and the philosopher. True science, however, must primarily be universal and unbiased; ever ready to acknowledge truth when and wheresoever it may make its appearance. Such an unbiased investigation will clearly show that of all that is real, the most real and the most obvious is—the spirituality of the soul.

When we speak of a "spirit" and of something "spiritual," everybody knows us to mean something of an entirely different order from this world of sense: everybody thinks of a being that is far removed from contact with the material world; a being that has entirely different functions from those found

[1] And also of the ancients. *Antiqui Naturales*, says St Thomas (1, q. 75, a. 1, ad 1), *nihil esse credebant nisi corpora*. Especially the *Stoics* who said that there can be nothing real excepting bodies.—*Cf.* Ed. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, 3rd ed., III., i., p. 117.

in the visible creation; a being that is subject to entirely different laws from those that govern matter: in short, a being that belongs to a higher supernatural order. Such a being is the human soul.

Through its subsistence, its independence from matter, the soul appears to be something spiritual. Were it, like the animal soul, dependent on the organism for its existence, we should have a proof that it belongs to the material order, and that its essence is material. Conversely, we conclude from its independence that besides and beyond the vitalisation of the organism it has a higher, supermaterial destiny, and consequently also a corresponding, *i.e.*, spiritual existence and essence.

Again, in thought, volition, and more especially in self-consciousness the soul has a vital activity that is not only not subject to, but by far transcends the laws of, the material world. All this already shows the soul to be a supermaterial being; one that belongs to a higher world. A more thorough examination of the soul's higher life will prove to an absolute certainty that this

life and consequently the soul itself is spiritual.

If we observe our own *process of thought*, it cannot but strike us that in order to grasp the material world, we must first of all strip it of its gross materiality; that, in order to make it the object of our thought and judgment, we must, so to say, *spiritualise* it. Human reason strives to take hold of everything by means of universal ideas; it drops the concrete-sensible (exterior) phenomena in order to arrive at the innermost essences of things. Thus by penetrating through the sensible and material to the supersensible and immaterial, through the particular and changeable to the universal and immutable, we arrive at the ideas of action and motion, of natural law and causal connection, of living and lifeless being.

This process of thought can be natural in such a being only that is itself supersensible and immaterial, *i.e.*, spiritual. If not, why must it, in order to cognise the material world, elevate it, draw and assimilate it to itself?

Thus does the soul, through the very

relation it bears to the sensible world, display its higher, spiritual nature. But this material creation is not the only sphere of the soul's cognition; there is another, a higher one.

The power of abstraction enables man to understand things that are wholly beyond the reach of the senses. To this category belong, *v.g.*, all the truths with which the several sciences are engaged; the moral qualities, such as virtue and vice; every kind of spiritual beauty and harmony up to the highest and most spiritual being — God. What a world of ideas! ideas which, as such, have no real existence in the universe, but are founded on mere relations; a world before whose portals the phantasy, like an exhausted bird, wearily drops its wings. In a word, the human intellect wanders through the territory of truth, and grasps truth for the very reason that it is true. How different the animal! It perceives some of the true and the real, viz., the sensible; beyond this, however, it perceives neither *that* it is true nor *because* it is true, but simply because it makes an impression on the organs.

Now, what is truth as such? Evidently nothing sensible, visible, in fact nothing that is in any way material; it is essentially and intrinsically supersensible, *i.e.*, spiritual. If this is so, then must the soul be homogeneous with this its proper spiritual food, *i.e.*, it must be spiritual. Even disregarding the soul's intimate union with the body, how could it naturally, nay, even necessarily, mount the height of this spiritual world were not the latter in some way or other in keeping with its own intrinsic greatness?

Against this it might be urged that the soul cannot be similar to everything that the intellect understands, because in this event it must ultimately be homogeneous with every kind of being, even with God Himself.

This conclusion is just as false as its premises. Our argument by no means presupposes that the soul is homogeneous with *everything* it cognises, but only with that which is the *proper* object of the intellect, that which it *everywhere* and in *everything* apprehends. In other words: The soul is homogeneous with everything *in as far as*

in the act of cognition it assimilates everything to itself. This, its proper object, is *spiritual* truth hidden under the cloak of the sensible. The soul extracts this truth out of everything, just as the bee draws its honey out of every flower.

It might still be urged that truth is hidden under a sensible garb; we perceive the spiritual in a sensible manner, and not immediately, as it is in itself.

Undoubtedly so. But, as a matter of fact, the spiritual and the true, even though they are apprehended in a manner analogous to sensitive perception, are in themselves the objects of our cognition, which would be impossible if the thinking principle, soul and intellect, were material. This mode of cognition corresponds exactly to the present state of the soul—a spirit *in* a body. Since the spirit itself dwells in a body, it must, in the act of cognition, change the sensible into the spiritual. The case were different with a spirit not confined to a body.[1]

A further consideration must here be

[1] *Cf.* Kleutgen, *Die Philosophie der Vorzeit*, II., 2nd ed., n. 803 and 851.

added: Through self-consciousness man perceives his own thought and reflection, his own volition and aspiration, and thus primarily perceives in himself *spiritual* activity, spiritual reality and truth. In and through this internal spiritual life he *experiences* the living spirit, the soul. Thus he is enabled to form an idea also of other spiritual things and conditions, to arrive at the idea of the highest, purest spirit.

It is, therefore, in the first place, the cognition of self that leads man to the anticipation of the supermaterial world: consequently his superior constituent belongs to that world. He contains within himself a diminutive spiritual universe. There he feels and touches things, not in a sensible manner, but spiritually. There his thoughts roam about with much more facility than his body moves in this material world, and he can so completely lose himself therein that he scarcely seems to see and to hear with the body. In such hours of interior peace and serenity he enjoys the quintessence of his existence; he lives, so to say, in the highest potency, and

returns to the sensible and corporeal life as into a prison.

Evidently, then, man actually contains within himself a spiritual element; his vital principle is a spirit.

Just as the intellect, the *appetitive power* of the soul, too, testifies its spirituality. The will desires everything that the intellect perceives as good, desirable, and true. This desire is not, however, confined to the natural creation, but transcends this and enters into the spheres of the spiritual, aspiring even as high as the highest good—God. And why does the will aspire to God? Not because this tendency affords sensible gratification, but simply because it is good to do so. Hence, if the will were not a supermaterial, spiritual faculty, man could never tend to immaterial, spiritual goods, but, like the animal, would be bound to those things that produce sensible pleasure.

Again, to whom does the soul wish the good? Evidently to itself. But the will does not aspire to everything that has been perceived by the intellect; on the contrary, it desires only such things whose possession

affords pleasure or gratification, and hence such things as are congenial to, and in some way or other effect perfection in, the cognitive subject. Now, these effects are really brought forth by spiritual and moral goods. In fact these are the goods through which the soul receives the highest and purest gratification. This, again, would be simply impossible, and these goods could not in the least appear desirable if the soul were not spiritual, because only a spirit can find pleasure and gratification in spiritual things; only a spirit can be perfected by immaterial goods. This is the reason why the animal is not at all concerned about spiritual goods; why it is as indifferent to them as to a food that is not according to its taste. As surely, therefore, as truth, morality, virtue, and God are spiritual, so surely, also, is the human soul a spirit.

Nevertheless, there is nothing that so clearly testifies the highly spiritual nature of the soul—a nature that is entirely extraneous to matter—as its *liberty*. The great law of nature under which the whole universe groans is that of intrinsic dependence on

other creatures: in a word, the law of necessity.

Lifeless matter is simply "inert." In consequence of its proper chemical and physical powers, it has, indeed, a peculiar activity and a definite natural tendency; of itself, however, it cannot exercise this activity: it needs an external agent, and must then perform its action in mathematical proportion to the stimulus of that agent. Hence it *is moved*, and has very little spontaneity. Its law is that of *necessitation from without.*

On a higher plane is the plant. In it there is an active principle which, though it requires an external impulse, does not necessarily correspond in mathematical proportion to this impulse, but only in so far as is conducive to the development of its organism. This, again, is necessity. The plant partially moves itself, and for the other part it *is moved.* Its law is: *partial external necessity and partial internal motion.*

Greater spontaneity we find in the animal —not as regards its perception, for this, too, is partially effected by external and partially by internal necessity—but as regards its

appetite. This is exclusively determined by the joint activity of the animal's sensitive faculties conjoined with its instincts, and even this necessarily; because, when the animal perceives something as congenial to its nature, it *must* desire and strive after it. Through the internal perception, therefore, of the congeniality or incongeniality of a thing the animal is determined to its action, and hence possesses a higher degree of spontaneity than the plant, but is still within the limits of necessity. Its law is that of *necessitation from within.* Hence its sphere of action is limited; one that it never transcends, and for this reason, all the individuals of the same species act in exactly the same way under the same circumstances: they *must* act in this way.

How different with man! Between him and the rest of creation there lies an abrupt and impassable chasm that forms the boundary of two distinct worlds. Man has a power that is absolutely free, that regulates and determines itself. Man can will or not will the object apprehended by the intellect; and even though this object

were ever so desirable, he can turn his back on it. True, everything that is good is desirable, but, in as far as particular goods are concerned, man rules supreme over the inclinations of the will, and determines himself with perfect freedom, *i.e.*, without any admixture of necessity. His law, therefore, is liberty. Exterior attraction may be ever so powerful, the object itself may be ever so beautiful, man can, in spite of this, cast it aside, and act according to the principle: *Stat pro ratione voluntas!* It is only in the event that the external agent is so powerful as to cause a confusion in the intellect that liberty ceases.

Whereas all other creatures *are* governed according to a uniform plan, and *are* unconsciously led to their final destiny, man alone governs *himself* according to his own *ideas*, and consciously strives to attain the end of his existence. Thus is the human soul, by and through its liberty, placed high above the rest of creation. It alone is a sovereign, an autocrat; all else is more or less in the bondage of nature's tyrannical laws. It alone, therefore, is of an entirely different

nature than this material world—it is a spirit. It is proper to the absolute perfection of the Highest Spirit that He gives all things life, activity, and motion without Himself receiving any motion, since He is in Himself unlimited activity—*actus purus.* Now, it is precisely through liberty, this participation in the divine independence and self-determination, that the soul displays with most unquestionable certainty its spirituality. Since, then, as a spirit, the soul belongs to a higher world, it must also be subject to the general law of that world, viz., the *moral law.* The soul knows this through its very nature, and the rudimentary elements of this law are inscribed into it in order that its spiritual activity may be regulated by it in the same way as the activity of matter is regulated by the natural laws. But not even the moral law can interfere with the sovereignty of the human spirit. It can, indeed, approach the soul with its claims, but it cannot subject it with physically necessitating power. Only voluntarily can the soul subject itself to the moral law; but just in this voluntary observance of the law of spirits consists its

true spiritual, *i.e.*, moral, greatness. How high does the soul stand above this material world!

The existence of the *human spirit* is a truth far removed from all reasonable doubt. With the same security and certainty with which the physicist, sustained by the evidence of experience, concludes that light, heat, electricity, and sound are kindred motions; with which the botanist and zoologist declare different plant and animal species to be homogeneous or heterogeneous: we, too, because sustained by the facts and observations of the *higher* life of the soul, conclude that it is radically different from everything round about it; that it is a spirit. Indeed, if we were to doubt every other reality, that of our spirit should be the last. For, on what is our certainty of the existence of the whole material world, this turmoil of life, ultimately based? Solely on our own perception, on the testimony of the senses and the sequent conviction of the intellect. But could not this conviction be a delusion or the result of a delusion; could it not be a dream, a game of the intellect?

There have been "educated men" who have really gone so far as to make this assertion. Unreasonably so indeed. But even allowing that there is a possibility of doubt in these things, should there also be a doubt as to the reality of our own spirit? No! This truth should remain as firm as ever, because this at least would be certain—somewhere there is a dream, a delusion. But where there is a dream there must be a dreamer; where a delusion, one who is deluded; where a doubt, a sceptic. And what does it mean to be deluded, to doubt? It means to think. But where there is thought there must necessarily be a spiritual principle that thinks. Spirituality, therefore, should be more certain than ever. Thus is the human spirit one of the first absolutely incontestable realities, the objective starting-point of all human certainty, through which, and in which, every other certainty is effected and exists.

These considerations will undoubtedly cause renewed astonishment, and make it appear more mysterious than ever how so sublime a being, a spirit, can be destined to form

one being with gross matter. One thing, however, is certain; that only in this way the harmony of creation is perfect, only in this way the world of sense and the world of spirits form one grand, harmonious whole. Man was destined to be the apex of the material world; he should be its intellectual head, and through him the world should receive its significance. At the same time he should, as inferior spirit, be the connecting link between the material and spiritual worlds, and as he must, on account of his corporeal existence, share for a time the misery and transiency of this lower creation, so, too, shall he, in time to come, through his spiritual nature, participate in the sublimity and stability of the immutable grandeur of the world that lies beyond. For, as a spirit man is necessarily destined for immortality.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL DEMANDS IMMORTALITY

"Does not the soul, then, when in this state, depart to that which resembles itself, the invisible, the divine, immortal, and wise? And on its arrival there is it not its lot to be happy?"—PLATO, *Phædo*, c. xxix.

"A FINITE being is in nought infinite." With this emphatic statement, Strauss believes to have finally settled the question as to the mortality or immortality of the human spirit. Biedermann expresses himself in similar terms: "Whatever originates in time also passes away in time as a finite being."[1]

No doubt the human soul, as all other beings excepting one, is a being of a finite nature and limited existence. But does it follow from this that its existence must come

[1] *Christliche Dogmatic*, 2nd ed., II., 655.

to an end? It is our task to prove the contrary.

We call that being immortal which cannot lose its life through death. Accordingly, immortality of a living being means as much as an endless duration of its existence. Now this endless duration may have different meanings. In its highest sense it predicates of a being the absolute impossibility of non-existence, because that being *must* exist, because its existence is an absolute *necessity* since it contains within itself the germ of life. In this sense Holy Writ says of God: "*Qui solus habet immortalitatem.*"[1] God alone is an absolute necessity; everything else could just as well not be. Consequently this divine immortality is also the only one that excludes both beginning and end; it is duration without beginning and without end. For that which is absolutely necessary always was necessary.

If, however, a finite being has immortality, it cannot have this out of itself or necessarily, but from Him only *qui solus habet immortalitatem:* of itself the being is contingent.

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 16.

The creature's immortality is, therefore, not an absolute necessity; it simply means that *after* a being is once endowed with life, it can no more lose it. This concept of immortality merely expresses a conditional necessity. The creature's immortality can again be subdivided into natural and supernatural.

It is proper to *natural* immortality that a living being contains within itself neither the germ of corruption nor the possibility of losing its existence and life through created agencies: that its intrinsic nature irresistibly demand a continual preservation of its existence and life.

In contradistinction to this natural, there is a *supernatural* immortality through which a being is forever kept and preserved in existence by a *special* act of God. This immortality can evidently accrue to every living being; whereas the natural immortality is the exclusive property of pure spirits and the human soul.

Precisely the internal life and the nature of our soul shall now show to a demonstration that it must be immortal.

We have already seen that our spirit,

though busied with the sensible and transient, ever strives after truth. But truth as such is unchangeable; it is not, like the material creation, subject to everlastingly different modifications. Truth cannot be dissolved, nor can it die: it did not spring into existence yesterday, and there is absolutely no doubt that it will exist to-morrow. No! the whole realm of truth as such is eternally unchangeable. It existed before this visible world; exists in it unaffected by change, and always shall be the same, even though all else go to perdition. Truth is co-eternal with God because, like God, it had no beginning. The theorems of mathematics, *e.g.*, were true and correct long before ever a man knew anything about them; in fact, before ever there were lines, planes, solids, and quantities: and they shall always remain true. This is the case with every truth, whether it be metaphysical, physical, or moral; in short, with the whole ethereal world of ideas. The objective ideas of, *e.g.*, justice, of good and bad, of virtue and vice, are absolutely immutable. The subjective concept, man's own opinion concerning these things, can

change, because it may be incomplete or even false; but only one can be the correct, the true, concept. Truth, therefore, is in itself immutable.

But if truth itself is unchangeable, it follows that the human spirit also is immutable. And why? Because the human soul perceives this very immutability, and naturally strives to possess it for ever. How would this be possible if the human soul were mortal? Should not, in that event, a being desire and wish to possess *as its own* things that are far above its nature? It is, indeed, possible for an imperishable being to desire perishable goods, because these may be, or at least may seem to be, compatible with its nature; but it is absolutely impossible for a perishable being to *naturally* desire and strive after imperishable things. The human spirit, however, strives after truth, and has an irresistible craving to possess it for ever; indeed, truth is so necessary for the human soul that even falsehood must take the semblance of truth before it receives any consideration.

Look at the human soul in the first stages

of its development, the child, and see its thirst for truth! How troublesome are children when they begin to ask their insatiable "why?" How eager are they to "learn": naturally the truth! And thus throughout life the soul never wearies in its search for truth, and even though it should fear the pain and labour of the search, this must be ascribed, not to the untiring spirit, but to the fatigue of the material organ. And when once the soul is in possession of truth, this forms its spiritual atmosphere and its perfect peace.

This powerful attraction toward the possession of truth is felt, not by certain preferred natures, but by every man, as soon as the necessities of daily life allow him time for a more congenial and pleasant occupation. Let us adduce but one trait of our nature. What does it mean "to be inquisitive"? It means to wish to know something not yet known; to strive after an increase of knowledge. But where is the man who is not more or less inquisitive? We all resemble those little winged creatures: as soon as the light of truth penetrates the

darkness of our spirit's night, we feel an irresistible impulse to bask in the rays of its splendour. This is the old truth expressed by St Austin in the words: *Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?* Hence it is that the fruition of truth is the only indulgence which does not, like the sensual pleasures, blunt and degrade the spirit, but whets and exalts it, and develops it to its perfect greatness and strength. Therefore truth is the only sphere in which the human spirit naturally lives; *its* atmosphere that it breathes; *its* element in which alone it fares well.

But how could it be possible that the spirit were transient, temporal, and subject to death, and would at the same time naturally strive after the continual possession of imperishable, eternal, and immortal truth? At every step nature shows us that all beings strive after such things only as are congenial to their own intrinsic nature. Nay more! As already remarked, imperishable truth is not only the proper element, but also the proper and exclusive nourishment of the spirit. For to perceive truth, to "know" it, is not an

activity in which truth is but the external object; on the contrary, the soul actually takes truth *into itself*, makes it its own intrinsic possession, and clings to it as everlasting truth. In a word, the spirit, by assimilating truth to itself, ever increases in truth.

Now, if, according to the sound principle of natural science, the animal organism retains from its food such ingredients or elements only as are homogeneous with its own substance, we are justified in concluding that the human soul, too, consists of such elements as it receives from its food. If, therefore, the spirit were perishable, truth, a spiritual food, would be indigestible for it, and the Creator, in bringing forth the soul, would have created a monster.

With the animal the case is different. It has not the least desire for *knowledge;* it is totally indifferent to truth, knows nothing about it, in fact it *knows* nothing at all, it simply *feels.* True, it receives sense-impressions, perceives the sensibly real; but beyond this it perceives neither that it is real nor that it is true. It desires only food and

coition; all things else are for it as though they were not.

One might say: Truth is, indeed, eternal, but man needs it for this transitory life only, and for the knowledge of his temporal interests. He puts it to practical use. The wonderful progress that the human race has made, and still makes, in everything that promotes and enhances this present life, shows how serviceable to man this realisation of his knowledge is.

No doubt truth serves all these purposes; but if it were given us for these purposes *only*, we would really be in a sad predicament, because in that event we would be more fortunate did we possess instinct instead of spirit; sensitive perception instead of truth. Notwithstanding all our modern inventions and improvements, we sons of Adam cannot by far satisfy our natural wants as well as the animal, because the latter does this with greater security, facility, and perfection than we. Our modern textile works, *e.g.*, will never produce such well-fitting clothes, clothes as adaptable to all the seasons of the year, as the quadruped's fur, the bird's plumage,

or the crustacean's shell; and no footed animal has reason to begrudge man the best foot-wear that human ingenuity can devise, because its own is much more serviceable. Our architects will never be able to erect palaces in which we could live as comfortably as the swallow in its nest; and, notwithstanding the great progress of the medical and its auxiliary sciences, chemistry, physiology, anatomy, etc., no doctor will ever be able to determine his diagnose as surely, and apply as confidently, the suitable remedies as the animal does this, though it is led but by blind instinct, without intelligence and truth. If, therefore, knowledge and truth served but our material well-being, they would indeed be of very little use, and it would consequently be much better for us if nature had endowed us with a subtile animal instinct, which would enable us to sustain our earthly existence with greater ease and to greater advantage. But since nature never gives higher faculties where lower ones would suffice, it is evident that spirit and truth have been given us for a higher purpose, and that it would be a degradation

of both to turn them into mere instruments for attaining our earthly welfare. The only explanation for man's sublime endowments, therefore, is a better existence beyond the grave.

Besides, it is not at all true that man values truth in as far only as it can be put to practical use. For knowledge, *i.e.*, the possession of truth, is in itself a valuable treasure, a sublime acquisition, because in itself it is a spiritual "treat." In fact there is not a single man who busies himself exclusively with the truths whose knowledge is advantageous for the trials and interests of this short life. On the contrary! How often does it happen that a man sacrifices the pleasures of this life for the sake of seeking truth in such sources whence he can expect no material remuneration whatever; his sole object, his sole reward, being truth itself. Have not many of the most important inventions been made by such men and at such times that the realisation for practical life could not even be dreamt of? These men simply investigated for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, of discovering truth,

and that, too, at the expense of their health and oftimes of life itself.

Here again we see the immortality of our spirit in a new light. Before, we saw it portrayed by the fact that the spirit demands an imperishable food, truth; now we have shown that it strives after truth *just because* it is eternal and imperishable, and that in doing this the soul is often wholly indifferent as to whether or no it will derive any temporal advantages from the possession thereof. It is, therefore, the very immutability of truth that exercises an irresistible magnetic power over the soul, and this the more the nobler man is in contradistinction to the animal which can care and labour, but for this life, and perceive the present moment only. Evidently this magic power of truth can influence none but immortal beings, spirits, since these look forward to an endless future in which to enjoy truth, and consequently need not be concerned as to whether it is of advantage for the present, because hereafter it will be a real panacea. "And just as, the body being mortal, its senses also have mortal things as their objects,

so, since the soul contemplates and beholds immortal things, it follows that it is immortal and lives for ever. For ideas and thoughts about immortality never desert the soul, but abide in it, and are, as it were, the fuel in it which ensures its immortality."[1]

Thus far we have seen that, as the spiritual cognitive power, so also does the will, give ample testimony to the immortality of the human soul. The will manifests itself as a power of an immortal being, especially in that it is *free.* Freedom makes the spirit "sovereign" over the whole creation;

[1] Thus St Athanasius (*Adv. Gentes*, c. 33; Migne, *PP.* Gr., tom. 25, col. 63). A thought expressed by St Thomas (*Quæst. disp. de anim.*, art. 14) might well be quoted here: "Ea etiam, quæ sunt *in se ipsis corruptibilia*, secundum quod intellectu percipiuntur, *incorruptibilia* sunt. Est enim intellectus apprehensivus rerum in *universali*, secundum quem modum non accidit eis corruptio." As, therefore, the intellect displays itself as a *spiritual* faculty in that it must, in a certain sense, spiritualise the material in order to penetrate through it, so also does this same intellect reveal its *immortal* nature in that it must elevate the perishable and transient to the imperishable and abiding, in order to take it up into itself as the cognised object. The universal, the idea (*universale*) is both spiritual and unchangeable at once.—Translation from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (second series), vol. iv.

no power on earth, no extrinsic force whatever, can effect even the weakest volitional act, and when such is once elicited, there is nothing that can destroy it: nothing can compel us to will if we will not, nor can anything hinder us from willing when once we will. Man's will, therefore, is strong enough victoriously to lead its resolution into the field against all the combined powers of nature. But if nature has not the strength to enslave the *free activity* of the soul, nor to destroy a single one of its free volitional acts, how much less can it enslave or destroy the principle of these acts, the volitional *spirit* itself? For the *activity* receiving all its strength, nay its very existence, from its principle cannot evidently be more powerful, more indestructible, than the principle itself. If, then, all nature can do nought destructive to these accidental migrations of the spirit, which come and go like wavelets, how much less is it able to harm the ever-abiding essence of the human soul? Through this invincibility by the powers of nature the spirit displays itself as a being entirely different from the whole transient and

destructible world of sense; as a being of unlimited durability. How different in this respect is the animal principle of life! This has no freedom: its sensitive appetite, like man's lower appetitive power, succumbs to mere sense-impressions. Whatever appears to be, *e.g.*, agreeable, the animal must necessarily desire; and whatever seems to be disagreeable it must flee. Nay more, too powerful sense-impressions, *e.g.*, too brilliant light in the eye, too violent excitation of the nervous system, can even destroy the material organ. Precisely this proves that the animal vital principle is destructible through the powers of nature.

There is, however, still another difference between matter and spirit, a characteristic that fathoms the depths of the human spirit's nature, and that shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is a being which naturally demands immortality.

All living creatures of nature are developed, but to that degree which nature has set as the limit of perfection, and beyond which no individual can go. When this summit, the plenitude of life, has been attained, the

creature holds its ground for a while, and then slowly recedes until it falls a victim to dissolution. The human body, too, must necessarily travel this path, the path of all creatures of nature. *Once* perfected in their earthly existence, *once* arrived at their apex, and hence once done away with for ever—this is the lot of nature's creatures. Thus do they carry within themselves the characteristic of transition. For, since they can attain their highest possible perfection in this life, they give evidence that for them there is no other existence.

The human spirit, on the other hand, being capable and indigent of a perfection that by far transcends the limits of this short life, has imprinted in its nature the seal of immortality.

Our age proudly calls itself the "age of progress"—justly so, in many respects, who would deny it? But he who thinks that our age is the only one that feels the spur of progress; the only one that has the power of ever driving the human mind to greater things, is sorely mistaken. No, the cause of this continual strife for advance-

ment and progress is deeply rooted in man's spiritual nature: it is this very nature itself. In every human being there is so great a capacity for progress that it is simply disproportionate to the fewness of days and the wretched condition of this life.

If we examine for a few moments the life of the human spirit in this world, we shall find it to be somewhat on the following lines. The first activity of the child's awakening spirit is the exigency of self-development, a real desire for knowledge. But how faint is this first dawn of the psychologic life, how paltry the thoughts and phantasms in which it moves. Still, every new idea is an impulse to greater conceptions, and at times it happens that in the course of our mental development a single idea suffices to enlarge the circumference of our knowledge a thousandfold: whole new fields of science disclose themselves to the mind, and cause all our former acquisitions to seem scant indeed. Thus, in a very short time, the diameter of knowledge has, if we may use the expression, increased by millions of miles. Notwithstanding the fact that the

human soul ever increases its store of wisdom even to the end of this earthly life, it never attains so eminent a degree of perfection as no longer to be able to become more perfect. Never yet has the man lived of whom we could say: This man has acquired everything that the human mind can possibly grasp; he has nothing more to learn; he cannot become more perfect. Here we see the inestimable difference between man and the rest of creation. Even though he descends from the noon of manhood's vigour to the waning strength of life's evening, his spirit frequently does not enter upon senility, but keeps the road of progress, and is as capable and as desirous of perfection as in the happy days of childhood. The strength of mind may indeed suffer from the decrepitude of the body; but there is neither a fixed period when this must occur nor is there any necessity for its arrival. In fact many people keep their strength of mind to a very old age, and progress with the same energy as in youth.

And not only this: no, it is the law of the spirit that its powers and faculties grow

stronger, greater, and more powerful in exact proportion to the increase in the exercise of their activities; that the more it works the more it is developed and strengthened and made more capable of still greater perfection. It is therefore very natural to the soul that though it had spent a whole lifetime in investigation, and had appropriated to itself all the treasures of knowledge of the entire past, it should consider this as nothing. The spirit has no resting-place; and when the body has once completed its task, the lifework of the spirit has but begun. Hence the marvellous humility (which is, after all, nothing but the plain truth) of so many of the greatest minds. "I know not," says the dying Newton, "what the world will say of my labours; but it seems to me that I was like a child playing on the sea-shore, that finds here a smoother pebble and there a more brilliant shell, while the great ocean of truth lay unexplored before me." A grand but typically human expression! For even the most profuse knowledge is as nothing in comparison to what man's spiritual nature qualifies

him to possess. The human spirit can attain everything that is knowable; *a priori* it excludes no order of truth; it desires truth in nature and spirit, in art and science, in life and history; everything that is true, good, and beautiful from the lowest creature up to God, the fulness of truth, beauty, and goodness.

However, we do not maintain that man is capable of an *infinite, unlimited* perfection. His spirit is and remains finite, and has, therefore, a limited capacity for development; and though there be nothing it could not grasp, it cannot include in its knowledge all being and all truth *simultaneously*. Consequently the human spirit, too, must have its limits; but there can be no doubt that these limits do not fall into the term of this present life. However much the individual may make use of the progress of mankind, and, based on its acquisitions, soar higher and higher, the fact still remains that neither the individual nor the human race in general has ever arrived at the summit of perfection. Strauss denies this:[1] "Of most of the old

[1] *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, p. 130.

people that we know we must say that they are *done;*[1] that they have handed out everything that was in them. Yes, even of a Goethe, in spite of his activity to the end, we must say that at the close of his eighty-two years he had outlived himself; Schiller, with his forty-five, not, etc."

Strauss here gives us some very interesting and surprising information, viz., that "most of the old people are *done*," and that it can possibly happen to a man of "eighty-two years" to have "outlived" himself. Nevertheless, he seems to be unmindful of the fact that "to be done," and "to outlive oneself," are just the opposite of "having attained one's spiritual perfection": and still this latter he wishes to prove of Goethe and others. The very fact that the body of old people is *done*, while the spirit, in a certain sense, only begins and still possesses perfect psychologic life, shows that no man can attain his spiritual perfection in this world, but must expect it of the future. How different is the dying Newton's opinion of the perfection due to the human soul! What

[1] Italics ours.—Tr.

a contrast between the views of a deep philosopher and those of a superficial *literateur*.[1]

Our lack of perfection displays itself most strikingly precisely in those things whose knowledge would be most profitable and most necessary, *i.e.*, in the knowledge of our own being and that of the Highest Being, the *causa prima* of all things. How many enigmas, both in the moral and physical order, are hidden in the knowledge of self. The γνῶθι σεαυτόν will, in this world, ever remain a riddle difficult of solution. Dark and difficult is the question concerning the ultimate cause of things. Whence comes this universe? What is the nature of its Author? What is His relation to the world? Sad indeed are the aberrations of the human mind; very paltry its progress in the solution of these the weightiest of all questions! What the mind can do, independently of Revelation, with such questions is sorrowfully portrayed in the history of the past.

[1] Concerning the spiritual and especially the moral perfection of Goethe, *cf.* A. Baumgartner, S.J., *Goethe*, 2nd ed., 1885; III., 257, 329, 430.

Now, whence this universal fact of man's imperfectibility in his earthly existence? It points to an evident *impossibility* of being perfected in this life.

In the first place, how short is the term of many people's existence, so that, even under the most favourable circumstances, they could not attain consummate perfection! How many difficulties beset the path of the individual's life, even though he does attain the average number of years! Think of the restlessness of earthly passions, the ceaseless struggle for existence, "the burden and heat of the day," all of which make it impossible to give the spiritual perfection due consideration: and it becomes evident that this life is not apt to allow the human spirit, even in a single instance, to attain its proper perfection. The world in which this could happen must necessarily be of a different nature than this world of ours. "Indeed," exclaims the Roman philosopher, "we shall be happy when, having left our bodies, we shall be delivered from these passions and rivalries. For, as even now, in leisure hours, we desire to curiously scrutinise things, we shall then

do this much more freely, and shall devote ourselves entirely to the contemplation and exploration of things, because there is naturally a certain insatiable desire in our souls to know the truth; and the shores of our future home will increase our desire for knowledge in proportion as the cognition of celestial things causes us less difficulty."[1]

It is, no doubt, a prevalent opinion in our days that progress and perfection need not necessarily be realised in every individual being. The individual, they say, is but a drop in the ocean of humanity; and this humanity, as a whole, is continually progressing, and will, in the course of ages, undoubtedly attain its perfection. The task and the real progress of every man consists in the "noble sacrifice to the world-process" (*welt-process*).

This sounds well enough, but is, after all, a very poor consolation; and, what is worse, a contradiction. At all events, the millions who have gone before us had struggled in vain for *their* perfection. And it goes without saying that we, too, would be forced to sink

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. 19.

into our graves without ever seeing our redemption; in fact there would be no hope for all the future, since no single individual, no matter how much it should rely on the acquisitions of the past, can ever attain its perfection here. Therefore the whole human race, which consists of individuals, would fall a victim to the same cruel fate.

Let us look at History, the mistress not only of the past but also of the future, and we shall find the same doctrine. A necessary irony of fate has so shaped the history of all the nations of the earth that just at the moment when their progress and civilisation were most flourishing, the social order, with all its acquisitions, rapidly hurried to its own destruction. To such an extent is "ever striving and never attaining" the law of humanity. Not a little better will the progress of our modern culture prove itself. Does it not even now rush on in that most ferocious form of the "struggle for existence" that has for its object not perfection, but destruction? This, then, is the progress of the ancient and of the modern world!

The "golden age" must, in this world, remain a dream of the human race.

Moreover, it is not at all true that such a progress, even though it could lead to perfection, would satisfy the demands of human nature. For it is the *personal*, the *individual*, perfection for which every single human being has a qualification and an exigency, and which is a postulate of his nature. It is the complete spiritual perfection of the *own personality* to which man is naturally called; and it is only after every man has attained this that the human race in general will become perfect through the world-process.

Strauss[1] calls the whole foregoing line of argument "an arbitrary reverie"; for it is a mere "assertion" that "the capacity of every human being is infinite and inexhaustible, and that it can be realised only in an eternity. Evidently such an assertion need not be proved: it is a mere babble, called by the conscience of every inostentatious and honest man, prevarication. He that does not inflate himself knows the finiteness of his nature and dispositions; is grateful for

[1] *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, p. 131.

the time allotted him to develop them, and makes no pretensions to a prolongation of his term of existence beyond this present life; nay, an infinite duration would terrify him."

We shall pass by the pithy expressions, and confine ourselves to the subject under discussion. "Such an assertion need not be proved." Undoubtedly, for no one has made the assertion that "the capacity of the human soul is *infinite* and *inexhaustible*." Strauss certainly includes in his category of "inostentatious and honest men," all those that consider themselves "civilised apes," and that do not believe in an eternity: on the other hand, the countless genii of the past and present must seem to him to be "dishonest, disreputable, and inflated men," because they believe in immortality. It is assuredly very good to be discreet and humble; but to have lower aims than those set up for us by nature is not modesty, but "hypocrisy," commingled with "cowardice." No doubt there are men who, for weighty reasons, are "terrified" at the thought of eternity, and who would, on this account, relinquish all claims to it; never-

theless such desires do not proceed from the nature of our spirit, but rather from the fear of an Avenger of evil in the other world.

Also other Protestant theologians seem to misunderstand our line of argument. Thus, *e.g.*, Lipsius[1] says: "The claim of *absolute* intelligence, sanctity, and bliss is incompatible with the nature of the finite psychological life," and he thinks that even "an *infinitely progressing* development" would not satisfy the human spirit. Evidently there is question here neither of the one nor of the other.

This, therefore, is settled: in contradistinction to the whole material creation, which can, and in many instances does, attain its natural perfection in this world, the human spirit *never*, not even in a single instance, realises its perfection in this life. Man alone, in the whole visible creation, gives evidence of a future life through his innermost nature, sublime faculties and dispositions: — of a life in which he can be and remain what, in accordance with his nature, he should be. Here, in this world, he shall ever be far distant from this perfection. And if

[1] *Lehrbuch der evang. protest. Dogmatik*, 2nd ed., p. 856.

now we turn our attention to the mighty struggle of the spirit; if we attempt to measure the strides of this great giant, and to conceive the immeasurable heights which, by its very nature, it is destined to ascend, then we get an idea of the vast chasm that separates matter from spirit, man from animal: we understand how the lowliest negress stands high above the most perfectly developed monkey. For the latter, even though it were allowed thousands of years for development, could never transgress its sphere; the former is, in herself, capable of a perfection that by far surpasses all earthly being.

It is, therefore, incontestably certain that the innermost nature of the human spirit points, with unconditional necessity, to another better life in which it really can and must attain its perfection. If there should be as much sense in the nature and equipment of the human spirit as there is in that of all the other creatures of the universe, it, too, must sooner or later attain its proper perfection. For the struggle for perfection is not arbitrary as, *e.g.*, the child's foolish

desire for wings or the beggar's dream of riches; no, it is a struggle for a state which, as we have seen, is not only compatible with, but also originates from, the nature of the spirit. It is the strife for a perfection to which the human soul contains within itself a claim, and the desire for which is so rational that a denial thereof must necessarily be irrational, a lie against nature. Man must, therefore, necessarily long for this perfection; he may, it is true, temporarily postpone the struggle, but he cannot continue for ever in this postponement: he can also bewail the imperfection of all human knowledge; but this only shows him more clearly the sublime things to which he is called.

Strauss, however, believes that he can weaken these arguments. He denies that man can attain the perfect development of his spirit's faculties. He says:[1] "Do we at all see that nature is prepared to develop all the faculties, all the germs? He who would assert this must never have strolled through an orchard in the summer, when the ground is covered with unripe pears and apples,

[1] *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, p. 129.

each of which could have become more than one tree; he must never have read in natural history that if every fish-egg were developed, the rivers and seas should not be spacious enough to contain them. Experience, therefore, teaches that nature is prodigal of germs and faculties, and leaves the question as to how many of them shall attain development and perfection to their own activity in the struggle against each other and against external circumstances. . . . Hence they must be able to prove that nature makes an exception with man in regard to his faculties."

Well, we too are acquainted with the fish story; it can be found in many primers. We have also taken a stroll in orchards, and we became meditative at the sight of so many beings that nature accounts as nothing; but our thoughts took a somewhat different turn. Strauss here overlooks a fact that cannot but strike even the most simple-minded observer. Countless beings—"apples, fish, etc."—do indeed find a premature end; but *countless* others, as many as space, sun, air, earth, and water allow, attain their

consummate perfection. Since man's *body* belongs to the natural creation, its lot is the same. But with the human *spirit* the contrary takes place. *Not one* of these, as already demonstrated, attains the complete development of its faculties; no, not even in a single instance. Nay, more! The human spirit *cannot* attain its perfection in this world because the necessary conditions, the *spiritual* "air, sun, and food" are wanting; it ever lacks an enormous amount of its perfection: much more than a fish-egg does in comparison with a magnificently developed fish. What would Strauss say of a world in which not one single fish would come forth from the milliards of fish-eggs; of a world in which all the apples and pears would fall unripe from the trees, so that not a single tree could grow out of them? Would not such a world be a perfect "physical nonsense"? And still, such a sham would the whole world of human spirits be, were there not a place where it could obtain its natural perfection under better and more favourable circumstances; for *all* men die before their spirit is per-

fected; they pass away in the first stages of their intellectual and moral development.

Strauss says that we must be able to prove "that nature makes an exception with man."

We *can* do this, but we *must* not. There can be a question of an exception then only when something is subject to a rule. But the human soul does not properly belong to the natural world, and hence is not subject to its laws: it belongs to the world of spirits. Now, Strauss gratuitously assumes that the same laws obtain in the spirit-world as in the world of sense, and that neither there every individual being attains its natural perfection. This assumption, however, is false. We *can* prove that there is, and must be, a different order of things in each of these worlds. In the world of sense the individual is of very little, if of any, account. For, whatever is of its nature transitory and inspontaneous is not an end to itself (*Selbstzweck*), and is not sought for its own sake; it has its end in the genus, in the household of universal nature, in man. But these ends can be attained without this or that individual; nay, it

frequently happens that even before the time of maturity an individual must, according to the laws of nature, offer its life for the good of the genus, if the common welfare should demand such a sacrifice. The course of nature need not necessarily to have been so arranged that every apple-blossom should develop into an apple, and every fish-egg into a fish. Hence, so many individuals perish prematurely. But this is not all. A whole genus in itself has no significance in nature's household, excepting as a member of the grand whole, in whose unity and harmony it must be consumed, and to which, if needs be, it must sacrifice itself. And hence one genus must give way to the other, must be subject to it, and even perish under it. And why all this? Well, if *this struggle for existence* were not the universal law of nature, what would ultimately become of the world? Finally, we would have, in order to come back to Strauss, nothing but apples and pears on land; nothing but fish in the water: and this, notwithstanding the fact that only through the annihilation of the weaker,

individual as well as species, nature can remain florid, hale, and hearty. Thus, in the natural order, this one point of view, viz., the welfare, harmony, and beauty of the whole, is necessarily decisive. Now, since man, in his corporeal and physical existence, is a member of the world of sense, he too is subject to its laws. He too is, in this respect, a part of the species, a minute link in the huge chain of humanity, and must, therefore, take part in the struggle for existence; consequently, thousands die prematurely, and "as the unripe apples are violently torn from the trees, so youths are forcibly carried away."[1]

The case, however, is different with regard to the order and the laws of the world of spirits, to which man's nobler half belongs. Every spirit is a free, self-determining being; in its personal self-consciousness it contains its independence from the world of sense, as also from every other exterior being—excepting God. For, no other creature has any physical power, or any absolute right over man's free self-determination, through

[1] Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. xix.

which he turns to the attainment of the eternal destiny that is proposed to him, and that he himself cognises. Much less power or right has any creature over man's spiritual being; over his innermost nature, and the proper development for which it freely and independently strives. Every spirit, therefore, has an inviolable right both to its existence and to the *perfection* of its being. For the spirit is primarily an individual, and only secondarily a social member of the great spirit-world. Consequently, it neither can, nor must, sacrifice its existence and perfection to the welfare and harmony of the whole. In fact, this is both unnecessary and impossible. A "struggle for existence," whose purpose should be the upholding of the order in the spirit-world, is an unthinkability. For, why is the struggle for the welfare of the whole necessary in the visible world? Because this world has not room enough for all the individuals of the Fauna and Flora which would exist if some did not find a premature end; and, what is worse, the world has not sufficient air, earth, water, food, and whatever else is necessary for the

life of material beings. None of these difficulties arise in the world of spirits. There is no danger that there will not be room enough; the spirits' lives consist of knowledge, mutual love, and sociability. This makes up the harmony and perfection of those spheres. But, with the increase of individuals, knowledge, love, and sociability also increase proportionately. Here, then, we have precisely the opposite proportion: the individual does not contribute to the common welfare by sacrificing its existence and personal perfection, but only by attaining first, and above all, its own perfect development. Still more; the most proper end of the spiritual individual is not, as we shall prove later on, to contribute to the greatness and beauty of the whole spiritual world—this end is secondary—but its most proper destiny is God, and its own personal perfection in God. This especially it is that gives the spirit the holy and inviolable right to its personal perfection, the complete development of all its natural powers; for it cannot be sacrificed for the welfare of the whole universe; not even the Creator demands this.

This is the inestimable difference between an "apple or fish" and the human spirit. Had the fish understanding and free-will; could he perceive the universal order, and the final destiny; could he determine himself; then he too would necessarily have an invincible claim to his existence and perfection; to the complete development of all his faculties; and all the powers of the earth could not prevent him from attaining these things.

The hand of the future Consummator, therefore, still rests upon every man in this world; and it is not yet withdrawn, because it has not yet completed its task. The consummation takes place in the other world, when the soul "approaches the pure, the eternal, immortal, and unchangeable; and, as though allied to it, dwells constantly with it."[1]

That this better life must be without end is evident both from the nature of the spirit itself and from the perfection for which it necessarily strives. Is the spirit immortal in this mortality where it forms one being with perishable matter; how much more will

[1] Plato, *Phædo*, c. xxvii.

it be immortal when liberated from the body: and, since it can subsist without the body, its destruction would be much more inconceivable than its immortality. For the nature of the spirit, in contradistinction to the mutability and instability of earthly creatures, is, as we have seen, unchangeable and abiding. This is its innermost nature, and to this corresponds all its striving and struggling, especially that which is most necessary, and which encompasses its whole being. Consequently, a temporal possession of spiritual and moral perfection, though it lasted millions of æons but would finally end in annihilation, is not the perfection for which the spirit is continually striving; such a perfection would not be worth the labour of the spirit: in fact, this would not be a state of ownership, but, as Cicero says, a time of enjoyment. "The Stoics allow us as long a time for enjoyment as they do the ravens; they say the soul will live a very long time, but deny its immortality."[1] The spirit, however, wills with the whole immutability of its innermost nature to remain in possession of its spiritual per-

[1] *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. xxxi.

fection; and it must will this, because this is the only true and appropriate aim of man's strife for progress.

As already remarked in the beginning of this chapter, Strauss thinks that he has triumphantly overthrown all these proofs with the one forcible sentence: "A finite being is in nought infinite." Accordingly, if the soul were immortal, it should be an infinite being. The Protestant theologian Biedermann, however, thinks that "whatever originates in time also passes away in time." Hence the soul, which originated in time, must also pass away in time. Furthermore, according to this "theologian," the idea of immortality "claims for the created spirit that which is the essence of the Absolute Spirit."[1]

We wish first of all to remark that these objections against the immortality of the soul are nothing new, and that they cannot be ranked with the discoveries of the nineteenth century. Six hundred years ago St Thomas Aquinas has already confronted himself with the same difficulties: "If the soul were capable of an endless duration, it follows

[1] *Christliche Dogmatik.*, II., 656.

that its nature would be infinite."[1] And again: "Everything that originates from nothing can also return to nothing, because beginning and end must be proportionate."[2] These objections are on a par with those quoted above; but they have also been refuted by the same doctor.

"In order to last infinitely," says St Thomas, "it is not necessary that the being be infinite, if only it must continually and every moment be kept in existence by an exterior agency, viz., by the Almighty Creator who preserves all created beings." This answer could not be more to the point. For evidently the being itself is by no means the sole cause of its eternity, since of itself (*quantum ex se*) it would *immediately* cease to be; consequently, it need certainly not be infinite *in itself*.

St Thomas answers the second objection in this way: "Whatever has originated from nothing must undoubtedly return to nothing if it is not preserved by God." And truly so,

[1] *Qu. disp. de anim.*, art. 14, n. 4.

[2] St Thomas, I., q. 75, a. 6, n. 2. *Cf.* also *Qu. disp. de anim.*, art. 14, n. 19.

because to originate *ex nihilo* means, "to receive existence from the Creator"; and *in nihilum redire* means, "to be deprived of existence *by the Creator*"; but it does not at all mean to cease to be *ex se*, just as little as *ex nihilo fieri* could mean "to originate from some intrinsic cause" which were absurd.

It would, consequently, be correct to say: Whatever originates in time *can* pass away in time; or, in other words, a being that originates in time does not exist necessarily, it does not contain within itself the cause of its existence; its *ratio essendi* is to be found in the Being from which it has its origin, and by which, therefore, it can be destroyed. Whether it *actually* will perish depends on another factor, viz., the will of the Creator, who, through the very nature of the spirit, reveals that He will *never* destroy it. The intrinsically necessary immortality of His own being, and hence the entire independence from external powers, constitutes the essence of the *Absolute Spirit;* but the immortality that depends on an external agent, and that is, therefore, *continually* in want of preservation, constitutes the essence of the created spirit.

This side of the question Biedermann has failed to consider, and consequently felled a very one-sided sentence.

Finally, the assumption of both our adversaries that immortality is tantamount to *infinite* duration, is absolutely false. This is the case only with God's immortality, because He alone exists from all eternity, and hence He alone is infinite.

Not so with beings that once were not. Never, in the course of ages, will the moment come when the human soul can say: Now I have lived an infinitely long time! The past shall ever be limited, finite. Such an immortality, however, is not at all in contradiction with the finite nature of the spirit.

* * * * *

We may, therefore, consider the human soul from whatever point of view we wish, and we shall find that the immortality in the future life is an imperative requisite of its nature. In conclusion, let us hear how the great Roman philosopher, in his own peculiar way, without, however, being exact in all his expressions, concludes from the nature and

the sublimity of the psychologic life; from the untiring activity of the spirit, to its immortality. "It is my conviction and belief that since the activity of the soul is so quick, its memory of the past so tenacious, and that of the future so sagacious, and since so many arts, sciences, and inventions are subjects of its knowledge, it cannot be mortal. Furthermore, since the soul is continually active, and is itself the principle of its action, its activity will never come to an end, because it will never part from itself. Again, since the nature of the soul is simple, and contains no heterogeneous or dissimilar elements, it cannot be dissolved; but if it cannot be dissolved it cannot perish."[1]

In another passage, speaking of the soul's powers, he asks: "That power which investigates hidden things and is called the power of invention or thought: what is that? Do you think that it is made of this earthly, mortal, and perishable stuff? . . . The spirit that recognised the revolutions and the motions of the stars gave sufficient evidence that it is like unto Him who made these

[1] Cicero, *De Senectute*, c. xxi.

things in the heavens."[1] The Creator Himself, then, has destined the soul to immortality. Immortality is the soul's sphere, just as the great ocean is the sphere of the fish, and the immeasurable skies that of the eagle. "The soul is most like to that which is divine, immortal, intelligent, uniform, and indissoluble; to that which always continues in the same state,"[2] says Plato. Hence not even the deadly combat will lord it over the spirit; rather does the latter anxiously expect of the separation from the body its own future perfection. For it death is the moment of entrance into the great and fathomless ocean of the true, the good, and the beautiful; in this life it sees these things as in a haze. Nor will God ever destroy the soul. As already remarked, He is indeed powerful enough to do so; but on the other hand, He is too wise, too faithful, too *divinely consequent* in His works. On the day of creation He implanted into the soul the necessity of immortality, and destined it to an everlasting

[1] *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. 25; *cf.* lib. i., c. 26, where he develops the same thought.

[2] *Phædo*, c. xxviii.

life, thus manifesting His eternal will never to destroy this being.

Concerning the *vital activity* of the spirit in its disembodied state, we can have, at most, very obscure ideas. But the difficulty of apprehension does not in the least deteriorate from the reality of the fact. If the universal fundamental principles of science, which are applicable not only to the past and present, but also to the future, can throw but little light on this subject, we are not allowed to give them up because of this.

No doubt the whole life of the disembodied spirit is a life of knowledge and truth, which will, in the other world, be the spirit's only and highest good, and in the fruition of which it will be perfectly enraptured. It may, however, be asked *what* truths the spirit will know, and *how* it will acquire them.

The spirit will know, first of all, itself, and that intuitively, just as it really is, viz., it will know itself to be a spirit, and, in a spiritual manner, in a much more perfect way than in this life. For since, then, the soul is no

longer one substance with the body, and its nature is no longer perceived only through its activity by means of the syllogism; and since the intellect performs its activity without the aid of phantasms, the sensible can no longer intervene between cognition and its own being: but the spiritual nature is immediately apprehended, and the consciousness of its spirituality is undeniable. In consequence of this the spirit must enjoy a clearer consciousness of its own personality and take greater delight therein, because it is in complete possession of itself. Now, if even the vague knowledge which the spirit has of itself in this world gives it the key to the world of spirits, how much the more the perfect self-knowledge which it has in the future! Hence the great puzzle of mankind, the *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, will be perfectly solved when the soul passes from this state of preparation and trial into the state of perfection and happiness.

Moreover, the soul takes into the other world all the treasures of knowledge it has acquired here below. This follows from the fact that what we call memory is not a

mere sensitive faculty, but is also spiritual. In the intellect itself lies dormant all human wisdom, both theoretical and practical. Evidently this is not lost in death.

Add to this that the soul when leaving the body enters as a pure spirit a magnificent spirit-world, where it will be able not only to see its milliards of inhabitants, but will also have spiritual communication with them, and participate in all the treasures of their knowledge. And this participation is a more intimate one than in the present life in as far as the spirits can mutually behold the depths of their individual natures and intellects, and hence can communicate their ideas to each other immediately, without the aid of words, and without tedious misunderstandings. In this life such an intuitive spiritual communication is impossible because of the intimate union between soul and body; but in the future there is no absolute necessity for a material transmission of thought through language. Thoughts do not absolutely demand phantasms, and much less a material word. Do we not even hear of cases where men,

in a state of so-called absent-mindedness, were cut off from all communication with the sensible world, and were, instead, brought into immediate contact with the spiritual world? And are not these preludes to the life beyond? Rightly, then, says Cicero: "But when we shall be nothing but soul, then nothing will interfere to prevent our seeing everything in its real substance and in its true character."[1] It is clear that the soul will, in such spiritual society, lead a far more sublime life than in this world. "A glorious day," exclaims Cicero, "when we shall depart to that divine assemblage of spirits!"[2]

Above all, we must remember that the future life is a *life in God;* that no being is immortal in any other sense than that it is called to partake, in its own manner, of the eternal life of the Absolute Spirit. For the truth that every human being primarily seeks is: the *causa prima* of all things. It is, therefore, the knowledge of the Creator; the knowledge of His greatness, wisdom,

[1] *Tusc. disp.*, lib. i., c. 20.
[2] *De Senectute*, c. 23.

and beauty; the knowledge of His relation to the creatures, to which every spirit is called: it is this that will constitute its higher psychologic life in eternity; this that will effect its perfection when the riddle of riddles shall be solved.

CHAPTER VI

MAN'S NATURAL TENDENCY TOWARDS PERFECT HAPPINESS DEMANDS IMMORTALITY

"Not fancy flattering and vain,
Is't from a foolish, empty brain;
But in the heart it sounds and rings
That born we are for higher things,
And what the inward voice doth say
Did ne'er the hoping soul dismay."
—SCHILLER'S "Hope."

WHAT is the mainspring of man's every act? Is it not that deep-rooted inclination toward prosperity? Is it not the aspiration toward lasting, supreme felicity, or, as it is generally called, that irresistible desire for perfect happiness?

Even the child, although as yet subject to none but physical wants, strives for satisfaction. When children suffer neither from pain nor *ennui* they are happy; their wants and their desires

are fulfilled. They have no longing for higher goods, because they know nothing about them. But as soon as they are in want of anything that lies within the spheres of their wishes, or as soon as they suffer any pain, their nature exhibits itself in the form of cries and lamentations. This shows us how painful a sensation is caused by the absence of a desired good.

As the child advances in years, the apprehension and esteem of goods keep even pace with its age. Accordingly, in the self-conscious youth, that painful sensation of want becomes a spiritual desire for apprehended goods. The mature man finally has a knowledge of perfect felicity, which naturally incites in him a craving after the sovereign good. It is only after having attained this that man is in a state of perfect satisfaction, of perfect happiness. Happiness, therefore, is the conscious possession of good unalloyed by evil.

From this natural aspiration toward perfect happiness, we deduce the immortality of the human soul in the following manner :—

The human soul has a natural desire, and

a natural disposition for perfect happiness. But natural desires and dispositions cannot be absolutely and universally neutralised. Therefore, this natural desire must be satisfied, either in this world, or, should this be impossible, in another life. Let us enter into the details of this proof.

That the craving after perfect happiness is natural, that it is a characteristic trait of man's nature, can be seen from its universality, as well as from the fact that man cannot withstand it.

It is, first of all, *universal*, and can be found in every human soul. The man has not yet been born into this world who during his whole life had no desire for perfect happiness. Is the history of the world anything else than a ceaseless struggle and strife for felicity? Is not the history of the nations, as well as that of the individuals, a continual toiling and moiling to escape evil, to attain and enjoy good? What, *v.g.*, is the aim of the gigantic exertions of our modern industry, with its endless labour, which in millions of smaller and greater circles draws half the world into its sphere of action? Everyone

strives to make mankind happy, and to establish a Utopia on earth. Let us observe the tendency of every individual, the secret mainspring of his actions. We find no thought that does not flow from the aspiration toward perfect well-being; no project, no plan, which does not tend to the realisation of this one fundamental desire of bliss. This is the end for which the manufacturer devises his plans; this the object that the capitalist has in view when making his investments; this the mainstay of the labourer who earns his bread in the sweat of his brow; for the attainment of this, the mechanic drudges along his weary existence; this is the prize that the scholar hopes to win when he hides himself from the world and plunges into the treasury of knowledge; this is what princes expect from the extension of their realms. But it would be superfluous to speak at greater length on this subject: everyone knows this from his own experience.

If, as some modern Rationalists say, this craving after happiness be an illusion, a dream of self-love, an imaginary compensation for

the many evils we must undergo; if it be such a dream, it is, at all events, as old as the human race itself, as universal as the nations of the earth: a dream that all men dream every day of their life, a dream oftener dreamt by day than by night.

Besides, it is a dream of which man cannot rid himself. Or is there anyone who can truthfully say: I do not wish to be happy; I forego the pleasure thereof? No, man *must* at all times, and in all places, aspire to happiness; this is his most natural, most powerful tendency, the innate idea with which he comes into this world; the mainspring of all his actions. It is self-deception to assert: "I would be satisfied with a moderate amount of happiness; I feel no desire for perfect felicity." If perfect bliss were within your reach you would undoubtedly grasp for it. Man may perhaps deceive himself with such thoughts, but not for long. He may be able to renounce all other tendencies. There have been men who had no feeling of good-fellowship; there have been moral monsters, who deprived their own children of all parental affection. But this

one thing, the love of happiness, has struck such deep roots in the human heart, that nothing, not even the saddest experiences, the basest moral depravity, can in the least weaken it. This is, indeed, a very wise ordinance of nature; for, the aspiration toward felicity should be the motive power of all man's actions. Take away this motive, and the world becomes the home of the indolent, the realm of absolute inactivity. Without this motive, man is in want of the first impulse to action; he is indifferent both to life and death, because the one condition under which he will consent to exist is: that he can become happy. For this reason, there is nothing more terrible for man than to live without hope.

If, then, this desire for happiness is so universal and so necessary; if it is the fundamental tendency of the human heart, then it must, at some time or other, be fulfilled. Sound philosophy, daily experience, and more especially the multitudinous investigations of science, corroborate this fact. It is an axiom that wherever there is a natural tendency, an instinct, that irresistibly impels a creature

towards a definite end, this end must actually exist, and it must be in the power of the creature to attain it. Among the milliards of tiny insects or animalcules endowed with organs that serve a fixed purpose, *e.g.*, a feeler, a smelling apparatus, or a natural means of defence, there is not one that has a desire, be it in regard to its food, to generation, or to the mode of life, that would not attain its object.

And should man alone, who is the noblest of all creatures, be an exception to this rule? Should he have a tendency, a desire that could not be appeased? This assertion would indeed be against all common-sense and against all science. Now let us ask: Whence does this thirst for perfect bliss originate? Did man himself implant it into his nature? Then he could also rid himself of it, at least in some instances. But since he cannot do this, we must say that it was given him together with his nature, that it comes from the Creator Himself.

And can this desire deceive us? If so, the error would fall back on the Creator, and be a blot on His wisdom, majesty, and

holiness. To have implanted into the nature of His noblest creature a faculty without an object, a tendency without an aim, a longing without hope, a continuous excitation of unrealisable desires: in a word, to have endowed him with the fundamentals of despair—could there be a more malignant imputation to the Highest Being? Would not this be tantamount to elevating Satan to the throne of the Godhead?

We must, therefore, conclude that this languishing thirst for happiness must some day be assuaged, and that fully. But when will this day dawn? It would be superfluous to prove that no one has yet lived to see it. It is even obvious that no one can live to see it in this world.

The goods of this world lack three qualities which are absolutely necessary for the pacification of the human heart. For the first they are *too unequally distributed.* But since all have the same desire for happiness, all should be able equally to enjoy life's goods, and if there should be any inequality this should originate solely from a difference of merit. What, however, is more disorderly,

what more capricious, than the distribution of earthly goods? But if the socialistic future could be realised, then the whole world would become state property, belonging equally to every individual; then perfect equality would be established, and we would no longer have poor people, etc. Alas! history tells a different story as regards the happiness the nations have reaped from Liberty, Equality, and Brotherly-love. It can very reasonably be doubted whether man, a free creature, being forced by the socialistic state to devote himself to labours least congenial to his disposition, could really be happy. And how long would this artificial equality effected by the socialistic state last? Before long a new schemer would place himself at the head of a covetous mob and destroy the artificially erected structure. There is but one way in which the Utopias that spring from the minds of socialists could be realised, viz., by plucking out of the human heart all covetousness; by giving the death-blow to every kind of dissatisfaction.

But let us suppose that the goods of this world could be equally distributed to the

satisfaction of all; would mankind then be happy? By no means. Earthly goods lack a second quality: they are too *empty*, too *vain;* their goodness is in no proportion to the sublime nature of the human soul, which is destined not merely to sensual delights, but to higher spiritual enjoyments which this world cannot give. If man's wishes were limited to this world he should be happy in proportion as he possesses a greater amount of earthly goods. But this is not at all the case. Everyone who is acquainted with the different classes of human society will agree with us if we divide them into the following degrees of happiness. The happiest people on earth are those who earn their livelihood by the work of their hands and in the sweat of their brow, viz., the mechanics and farmers. Less happy is the great middle class. Unhappy are the very poor and the very rich. And still, among all these, there is not a single individual who is perfectly happy. The last mentioned class of society it is that sends forth the suicides who, either because despairing of the necessary means of sustenance, or out of sheer satiety, bred of excessive indul-

gence in the world's pleasures, put an end to their wretched existence.

Even granting that earthly goods are not too empty for the human soul, at all events, the indulgence in them is too *short;* man could not find time to be happy. The human soul wants the lasting, the abiding; the eternal only is worth striving for. Therefore, even though earthly indulgences were compatible with the soul's spiritual dignity; even though they could fill the immense gulf of human desires; the terrible thought that the time *must* come when it shall lose everything would haunt it and be a source of terrible agony. Consider also the wretched way in which happiness comes to man in this world! We may say, in a certain sense, that the soul can enjoy all possible happiness simultaneously; at least, it flies on the wings of thought into the remotest future. This precisely is the soul's great power of expansion; this it is that distinguishes man from the animal which enjoys the present moment only. We too enjoy in this life but the present moment—that short period of time that separates the past from the future. Past

enjoyments are for ever past; future happiness is not yet our lot, and we know not for certain whether we shall live to enjoy it. Thus, confined to this single moment of felicity, gazing into the future as into an impenetrable darkness, surrounded by death in the midst of life, and confronted by the terrible uncertainty that awaits us beyond, we should be able to enjoy perfect happiness!

What, then, is it that man needs in order to be happy? Which are the goods that are compatible with the dignity of the human soul? They are primarily spiritual enjoyments, supermaterial goods. Whatever may be the divergence of opinion with regard to the highest good, all men agree that it must correspond to the fundamental desires of our nature. Now, the fundamental desires of man are: the desire of knowing, acting, and enjoying. Knowledge without obscurity, power without weakness, enjoyment without suffering; these are the most desired goods. And how poorly are we fitted out with them!

Some might, indeed, think it strange that we enumerate knowledge among the most

desired goods. Experience, however, proves the fact. When a multitude of people is about to sit down to a sumptuous meal, and in that moment someone should announce an interesting bit of news, the craving after knowledge, the desire of ascertaining news, will appease all the desires of the lower man until his rational appetite shall have been satisfied. An exciting story can oftentimes divert the attention of a sick man to such an extent that he seems to be wholly insensible to the sufferings of his body. So great is the desire of knowledge. It is this same love of knowledge that delights the child while listening to its mother's tales; that makes the reading of an interesting book a pastime, a source of exquisite pleasure to the youth. Yes, even the craze for reading, and the mania for the amusements of the theatre so prevalent in our days, may be looked upon as sprouts of this same desire. Notwithstanding the numerous gratifications accorded it precisely in these days, what a famishing hunger still holds the soul! How miserably fatigued is man when he lays aside his book, or when he returns

from the theatre! How are the greatest events of earth too small, the most profound truths too superficial, to make us happy! And then the deeper studies of the human mind! How hidden and obscure is all the knowledge of philosophy and natural science! What advantage has, after all, the greatest intellect over the poorest servant girl? This —that he is more conscious of the fact that in reality he knows nothing.

Man wishes to possess intellectual superiority; he wants to be something, to have a very extensive field of operation. There is not a single son of man who does not aspire to the highest position in his own little circle; there is not one who would not, if he could, make everything radiate from him as a centre. What an incongruity is there between man's mental faculties and his physical powers! It takes but an instant for the mind to devise and to will the plan of a colossal structure; but the execution requires many centuries and millions of labourers. The power of the mind, as displayed by the numberless mechanical and industrial inventions, is so much lauded and

admired. But is there anything that shows more clearly our infantile weakness than the fact that, like a cripple who can walk only with the help of an artificial mechanism, we must make use of so many diverse means to sustain our miserable existence?

What, finally, can be said concerning our intellectual enjoyments? The noblest pleasures of the mind come to man only in very small quantities. They are often purchased at the price of great sacrifices and amid great physical privations. Our soul has a sense for the beautiful, the grand, the sublime. And still, where is the beauty that never fades? And how does sadness overshadow the most exquisite spiritual delights? The purest joy—that springing from virtue—does not this make man perfectly happy? But alas! who laments more his weaknesses and vices than he who devotes himself most earnestly to the pursuit of virtue? Virtue in this life precisely consists in the continual warfare against our own wretched selves; but the peaceful possession, the victory of virtue, we cannot expect on this side of the grave.

Thus we see that the thirst for happiness cannot be assuaged in this world, and it is for this reason that there must be another life for the soul. Another world, one much grander, much more wealthy, much more magnificent, must in the future receive us. We shall enter into a world that expels the very shadow of a futile desire; one in which the soul shall be elevated upon the pedestal of its real dignity; where we shall find truth in all its splendour, and where greater joys and more abundant riches than ever Solomon dreamt of await us. A world whose inestimable wealth can satisfy everyone, from whose coffers all can receive an equal share, shall be our lot. We shall there find goods so sublime that never the words can be applied to them: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!" That world must, however, principally be a world without end—one from which we never must depart; one in which we shall possess the great and the beautiful, not transiently, enigmatically, as in a mirror, but for ever, in perfect reality.

What kind of a world, then, can this be,

and what are its goods? The philosophy of all ages shall furnish us with the answer: it can only be a world that is infinitely great and perfect; one blessed with riches of infinite value. Such a world that were we to collect all the truths of this earthly vale of tears into one great truth; all its splendour into one dazzling brightness; all its harmony into one rapturous melody: and if one human eye could see, one ear hear, and one soul enjoy all this, it would still be as a spark in the night, when compared to the noonday sun. This world and its happiness must be a something that can satisfy and pacify my unlimited faculties and my unlimited desires; a world, therefore, that must itself be infinite in truth, beauty, power, love—in short, the sum of all perfection—God. It must be God, the author of truth, goodness, and beauty; God, the prototype of all that is beautiful here below. God Himself has implanted into us the insatiable desire to possess Him. The natural aspiration toward well-being and happiness typifies nature's mighty craving after God. In Him the soul shall find true rest, power, superiority, and significance, since in Him it

shall possess a being in whose eyes the consummate power of the nations is as weakness, before whom all greatness is as dust. In Him man shall find the enjoyment of a good that is compatible with the nobility of his soul; there he shall find pleasures which never beget satiety, because they are granted by an infinite God. Whoever tastes of this infinite ocean of bliss need never say to his neighbour: Begone, that I too may drink. All enjoy simultaneously perfect happiness, and that for ever, because the Supreme Being is for all ages unchangeable.

This is the object of our happiness, this the object which we have been seeking from the very dawn of our reason. This it is that the child seeks and the youth desires; after this the great masses are continually striving; this is the object to which all aspire, but which no one has yet attained in this world. Hence every human soul is restless until it acquiesces in God; and for this very reason He must at some time belong to the soul, unless the latter, through its own fault, forfeit this happiness. This is not only a

postulate of our nature, but also a perfectly correct conclusion drawn by the intellect: it is a *truth* in the strictest philosophical sense of the word.

CHAPTER VII

MAN'S MORAL NATURE POSTULATES IMMORTALITY

"'Tis immortality—'tis that alone,
Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill;
That only, and that amply, this performs."

—YOUNG.

THUS far we have shown that the fact of immortality can be deduced from the essence of the soul; and in doing this we paid almost exclusive attention to its physical nature. Quite as striking, and perhaps more intelligible, is the testimony received from an examination of the soul's moral nature.

Before proceeding, it may be well to state what is meant by the soul's "moral nature."

By the physical nature of the soul is meant the soul in as far as it is the principle and ultimate cause of every physical act, *v.g.*, thought and volition. Accordingly, by

"moral nature" we mean the same soul in as far as it gives the immediate impulse and is the proximate norm of every *moral* act. Whereas everything that is inferior to man, is subject to physically necessitating laws, he alone has in his conscience a law that he can freely observe or freely transgress. He *leads himself* to the end he has in view, while all other creatures *are led* to their natural destiny.

Thus does man's moral nature portray his sublime dignity. But precisely in his moral nature man displays also the greatest amount of dependence; for the moral law is indeed *in* the soul, but it is just as little *of* or *from* the soul as the intellectual nature, with which the former is identical. Conscience tells man that even though he is not forced by physical necessity, he *should* and *must* obey the moral law because of his responsibility to a higher Lord.

What, then, is the foundation upon which man's moral structure is built? *Conscience.* And what is conscience? Primarily, it is the knowledge of moral good and moral evil—a knowledge that every man has within him-

self. In general, however, conscience is defined as "*that interior voice in man which tells him what is good and what is evil.*" Consequently, it consists of intellectual acts, thoughts; it has nothing whatever in common with sensual affections or sentimentality. Conscience is the human soul itself, in as far as it is the norm of morality. But this is not all. Since man *ought to* act in accordance with morality, he must know *why* he ought to act in this way. This *ought*, therefore, presupposes a higher, a commanding authority. Hence conscience must be an internal, supreme command, which man *must* obey; it must be a law that man cannot change at will; a power to which he is responsible, and, finally, an authority that promises reward or punishment.

Now, what is the nature of this reward or punishment? When and where will it ensue? Conscience, with all its hopes and fears, is not at all concerned about this material world; it continually directs us to other spheres. It is, in the first place, a purely spiritual voice that speaks to us of an ideal but real law; of a Lawgiver whom "no eye hath seen," but

who exists, who is continually at our side, and who knows our most secret thoughts. It speaks of a judgment and a tribunal, of which the imagination can form no picture, and which do not enter into this term of life, but will certainly, sooner or later, take place. All this clearly indicates a judgment, a retribution that has nothing in common with this world of sense.

In unison with this, is the fact that conscience does not leave man even when he is about to depart this world. At the brink of eternity man has nothing more to hope, nothing to fear, from this world. The monument over his grave secures him against all earthly justice. But at the very moment when he is in the arms of death, man's conscience speaks louder than ever; nay more! even though, through conscious neglect, it had been stifled for a whole lifetime, it is a common phenomenon that in the last moments it reasserts itself, and, arising in all its moral vigour and greatness, drowns with its voice all other interests.

Conscience, therefore, is a continuous and loud testimony of man's future existence; for,

to hope and to fear in this world were folly, if the last moments of this life would not at the same time be the threshold of the hereafter, if man would not find beyond the grave the real object of his hopes or fears, and, therefore, the real object of his existence. Nothing, then, is more consequent than the simple conclusion: Conscience tells us that, sooner or later, we must render an account of ourselves before a higher tribunal. But this is never done during the present life. Therefore, it shall take place *after death.* If it is certain that we must give an account of ourselves after death, it is self-evident that our persons shall continue to exist after our departure from this world.

That this continuation of our personal existence shall be without end, is also, in some way, testified by conscience. The very notion of responsibility necessarily includes reward or punishment. We may, indeed, find a man here and there whose conscience does not hold out with absolute certainty an everlasting punishment; but it cannot be doubted that the pleasant hope of the virtuous is directed toward an eternal reward;

one that is really worth the sufferings endured in this world; one that is an adequate recompense for the hard struggle for virtue. The conscience of the virtuous man does not console him with a transitory reward—one that should be followed by renewed trials and sufferings, or, one that should terminate in annihilation. This explains the fact that all the nations for so many centuries believed in a happy world for the just; whether they named this world Elysium, Lower Regions, Paradise, or whatever else, the fact remains that they proclaimed the existence of a world without end.

Thus is the conscience of every man a testimony, not only of immortality—a testimony that gives as distinct and weighty an evidence as the voices of the milliards of human beings that ever have inhabited, and ever shall inhabit, this globe—but it is, at the same time, a continuous, silent, and yet weighty admonition and remembrance of a future life; a voice which man cannot with impunity disregard. It is the expression of the highest justice in the immortal nature of the human soul; the expression of that

justice which rules the world and all ages, that justice which is the foundation of all social order. And as truly as justice and equity are necessary for the welfare of the nations, so true is it, that it were better that the whole conscienceless human race should be wiped from the face of the earth, if ever conscience, and with it, the testimony of immortality, should become extinct.

This view of conscience naturally leads us to examine the question of immortality from another, more common aspect. The moral law is a precept for the human race in general, as well as for the individual. Not only from the moral nature of the soul, but also from the *universal moral order*, as it exists in the world, can the immortality of every free creature be deduced. The moral order of the world, as well as the moral nature of the individual, demands a law which, though it does not bind with absolute necessity, must, nevertheless, be observed in the same way as the physical laws of nature. This, however, would be impossible without a sanction, without a higher providence. It is the greatest misfortune for a state to

make itself guilty of the reproach: Here justice has lost its sway. And yet, this is the very reproach that many people load upon the whole human race, when they put the question: Is there any justice that rules over this world; that guides the fortunes both of nations and of individuals; that distributes equally among men reward and punishment, happiness and misery?

The government of the world in its relation to the individual, the reason for which God permits and ordains this or that in regard to the individual, is indeed a dark mystery—perhaps the most difficult problem to be met with in this world. And still it admits of a solution—a complete and unitary solution. Surely, if the human soul be mortal, then the government of the world is not only an inscrutable mystery, but there exists no such government at all. On the other hand, if we admit that the human soul is immortal, then such a government exists, and is the epitome of wisdom.

What does justice demand? It demands that everyone receive his due. As regards man's moral actions, then, justice demands the

reward of virtue and the punishment of vice. Only in the event that the good receive a better lot than the wicked is there a strict justice ruling over the turmoil of this world.

Now let us ask: Is there really a just distribution of earthly gifts in this world? This question might seem to be vain, so evident is the contrary. At his very first appearance on the stage of life, the individual seems to be the despicable toy of fickle, oftimes cruel, fate. We see one without any personal merit whatsoever born in the midst of luxury and wealth; another, without any personal fault, enters upon the most bitter misery and extreme poverty. And what is the further course of events? Is not fortune as favourable to vice as it is to virtue? Does not misfortune, like lightning in a storm, strike the just man as well as the sinner? Do not fire, financial ruin, disease, and the violent tearing asunder of the most intimate ties of relationship and friendship fall as heavily upon the good as upon the bad? And what if we would dwell on the injustice perpetrated by man against his fellow-creatures? Think, furthermore, of the count-

less crimes that never see the light of day! Who is it that fights the "struggle for existence" more easily and to greater advantage? Is it the honest man who strictly adheres to the mandates of conscience and who uses honest means only: or, is it the disreputable scoundrel who outdoes his fellow-man in cunning and treachery, who has innumerable tricks at hand, and who shrinks from no crime if only it helps to attain his purpose? The adage "honesty is the best policy" does not hold good if there be no future, everlasting life.

But cannot human justice come to the rescue? Alas, how few of the crimes are brought to its knowledge! The whole internal world of virtue and vice, that lies hidden in the heart of man, escapes its juridical power; and of the exterior transgressions there are very many that its avenging arm never reaches. Besides this, human justice is maimed, it is one-armed; it punishes, but does not reward. And again, justice, as exercised by man, is a scale that is subject to all the schematisation of human perversity. Where is the reward for all the

secret struggles and sufferings that "no eye hath seen," and that have been endured purely and solely for virtue's sake? Where is the punishment for the life of the reckless wretch who has built his palace upon the groans of deceived and broken hearts; upon the ruined fortunes and lost happiness of whole families? And how, in derision of all justice, does public opinion, with its bitter mockery and calumny, persecute the virtuous who have been crushed by the hard blows of misfortune; whilst vice in all its vicissitudes has the effrontery to appear in public and to satiate itself with the plaudits of the people.

Is this state of the human race, as it has been for ages past, as it is now, and as it shall be in the future; is this condition, if it should be our final doom, in any way reconcilable with our idea of a highest, all-ruling, all-powerful justice? Would really a God rule over the world if there were no better remuneration? No, certainly not! For, if there is a God, He must be infinitely good, incorporate goodness and love, supreme justice, and perfect sanctity. He must take

infinite delight in virtue, and reward it with a really divine gift; He must also have an infinite hatred of vice, and punish the sinner. The day of retribution, therefore, must sooner or later dawn. Or should the moral world, which is by far superior to the physical order, be a chaos? This is precisely the difference between the two. The laws of the physical world are norms which coerce the individuals to move, operate, and live in accordance with the decrees implanted into nature by the Creator. The moral law, however, does not coerce the free creature; man should observe it, and, by his voluntary co-operation, effect moral order. Now, since man so frequently disturbs and transgresses this order, he must at some time be called to an account, and then receive the punishment due his crimes. "A future state," says Cuvier in his *History of the Mammals*, is a deep-felt want, "because the Creator has exposed no other part of creation to such disorder as we should have in the case of man, *were there no future retribution.*"

When, then, the human soul leaves this world, a rectification of all circumstances, a

restitutio in integrum for the good and virtuous, a punishment for the wicked and the despiser of all moral order, must ensue. There fortune must smile on virtue only; the blows of fate, unhappiness, and punishment, must fall to the lot of the sinner. Then must a new history of the world be written, not by the hand of man, but by the hand of the Omniscient, who shall inscribe therein the most secret acts of the human heart.

This is the great retribution to which the conscience of every human being testifies whenever it performs a good or a bad act; this is the restoration of the moral order, which has been an object of belief to all the nations. True, there have been, and still are, individuals who deny the fact of a general retribution, even in spite of the testimony of conscience. But this is not at all to be wondered at; for, as nothing is more difficult than self-knowledge, so nothing is easier than self-deception. On the other hand, there has never been a whole nation that denied a future retribution. Indeed, the day of general retribution is long in

coming; but we short-lived creatures have very little patience; with God, however, before whom a thousand years are as one day, the case is different.

Finally, could it possibly happen that this new order of things would last for a while, and then pass away? No, it must last for ever. If the reward of the virtuous could be taken away from them, would it be worth all the trials and sufferings? A temporary reward would not suffice to induce man under all circumstances to observe the moral law. And would a temporary punishment, however great and painful, suffice to keep man from sin? The mere thought: Once it will end, and then everlasting happiness! is apt, at least in numberless instances, when the force of temptation or passion goads man to sin, to rob the most terrible punishment of its sting. If, therefore, God wishes to sustain morality, the day of retribution must decide over an eternity; must ordain everlasting reward or endless punishment.

Immortality, therefore, gives the only solution to the great problem of the world's government, and even though some things

remain mysterious and inconceivable, the day will dawn—thus teaches the belief in immortality—in which the veil shall be lifted, and the whole mystery lie open before us. The time will come when the Lord shall settle accounts with the nations, and justify both Himself and His government. Indeed, the history of the world is also a judgment of the world: here too, virtue frequently receives its reward, vice its punishment. But this is not the general rule; it is but a passing shadow of the Infinite Justice reflecting in this unjust world; its final sentence, its judgment of the nations, it is not. Immortality and its happiness cast many rays of light into the darkness of this life, thus brightening the hours in which we are threatened by despair. For it tells us that an infinitely loving Providence guides, with mighty hand, the fortunes of mankind. Is man destined to be happy? Then he must be an object of especial care to the Creator; then must God sustain him with all the love, wisdom, and power of His divinity; then God stretches out to him the arms of providence, and shields him against the

cruel blows of fate; then He leads him through a short path of suffering and darkness, to everlasting bliss and light; then is this life but a time of probation; this world not our home, but a place of exile and hope, until the dawn of glory.

In conclusion, let us view the picture of the world's government as portrayed by such as do not believe in immortality. For brevity's sake, let us hear the chief defendant of infidelity, David Strauss. He leads cruel fatalism in all its despicable nudity before our eyes, when he says: "The falling-off of the belief in providence really belongs to the most sensitive forfeits, which go hand in hand with the separation from the Christian church-belief [viz., the belief in providence and immortality]. Man, unarmed, and unassisted, finds himself placed into this gigantic world-machine, whose iron-toothed wheels revolve in buzzing revolutions, and whose heavy hammers and stampers fall with deafening thuds, never safe, even for a moment, against making an incautious move, and against being seized and mangled by one of its wheels, or crushed by one of its hammers.

This sensation of being abandoned and exposed, is, indeed, very painful."

And what indemnification does Strauss offer his readers for the belief in immortality? "As regards the indemnification, which our view of the world offers for the belief in immortality, you might expect me to give a very lengthy explanation (certainly!), but must satisfy yourselves with a very brief one."

It is really worth the while to adduce more in detail this indemnification, this "soothing oil" that drips out of the world-machine. For clearness' sake we will *classify* the consolatory reasons of the atheist.

1. It *must* be so, the "dreadful abandonment and exposition" is a necessity. Why should we deceive ourseves? Our wishes cannot change the world, and our reason (!) shows us that the world really is such a machine.

2. To demand an exception to the execution of the one law of nature (*i.e.*, to demand that we should not be seized and crushed by the gigantic world-machine), would be tantamount to demanding the destruction of the whole universe, *i.e.*, of that world-machine. In

other words: If so many millions are seized and crushed, then we too must submit ourselves to this ordeal.

3. "By means of the agreeable force of habit we unconsciously arrive at that stage where we accommodate ourselves to a less perfect condition" (viz., of being mangled by the world-machine) — what an agreeable habit! what a pleasant condition—"and

4. Finally, we are led to see that our condition receives but its form from without, its measure of felicity or misery, however, from our own internal being." That is to say: As long as I keep up courage, and am interiorly satisfied, the being "seized and crushed by an iron-toothed wheel" is nothing but a mere "external form."

5. He who, amid the many sufferings and the few enjoyments of this life, "does not come to the conclusion that he himself is destined to enjoy all this but for a while; he who cannot prevail upon himself to depart this life with sentiments of gratitude at being liberated from a duty which must ultimately become tedious, and who is not thankful for having been allowed to assist, to enjoy, yes

even to suffer for, this great work: well, such a one we must refer to Moses and the prophets!"

The hope of a better existence, therefore, I cannot give you; but thank this world-machine from the bottom of your heart whenever you happen to come into contact with its iron-toothed wheels. Before long you shall fall a victim to its heavy hammers and stampers; but then rejoice, for that's the end of you. Above all, die hopeless, *i.e.*, in utter despair! Strauss has nothing better to offer those who are not satisfied with this: "He who does not know how to help himself cannot be helped, he is not yet ripe for our point of view."[1]

[1] Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 8th ed., p. 368.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EFFECTS OF THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY CONFIRM ITS TRUTH

"Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of heav'n on all his ways;
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account."

—MILTON.

THE belief in immortality is of paramount importance for the individual as well as for mankind in general, because our whole view of life and all our tendencies are regulated by it. If the human soul be mortal, this world and its pleasures is the highest and only aim of life. Then the old saying: "Let us live and be merry, for to-morrow we die," should be the guiding star of every man's life; to follow any other principle were folly. But if my soul is immortal, my whole view of life is

immediately changed. Then must I regulate my earthly life with special regard to the future, everlasting existence, because the present has no real value unless it have reference to the future.

This is the incalculable importance of the belief in immortality: it conditions our whole moral world-view. It transfers the entire weight of human existence from this transient life into the future state: from the flesh to the spirit. The belief in immortality discloses to our view a mysterious future which is of far greater importance than this short earthly life. Hence, if we wish to be consequent, we must attune all our thoughts, words, and actions to this prospect of an immortal life, and we must look upon the present as a state of *preparation* for the future. This view of life, by spurring man on to battle with the faults and weaknesses of his nature, effects order in him, and thus raises him to his real dignity. Let us enter upon a more detailed examination of this ennobling effect of the belief in immortality.

The ultimate cause of all the moral depravity in man, is the inordinate love of

self—egotism—that narrow-minded disposition by which every man concentrates in himself all the rest of creation; by which he refers everything to his own personal weal or woe, and continually brings himself into the most glaring contrast with his fellow-men. Take away the belief in immortality and this egotism becomes the only motive-power of all our actions, and since then there is only one life—and that an earthly one—we have but to sustain this, and care for nothing else. In this case the basest egotism becomes the most necessary virtue, the "cardinal virtue" from which all other "virtues" take their origin. Without the belief in immortality, man, sensuous man, is his own *summum bonum*, his own God. With this, morality is a thing of the past. For, if this should be our only life, all good acts such as, *v.g.*, justice and kindness, proceed from egotism, the most degrading of all motives. With this view of life, man falls below the level of the animal.

On the other hand, if we hold fast to the truth of the soul's immortality, the centre about which everything must revolve is no

longer the "sensible ego," but the great, infinite good, upon which our future happiness depends—God, who perfectly satisfies and beatifies our spiritual ego. The hope of attaining this good by means of the exercise of all our strength will be our only aim; every other issue will be brought to bear on the future, and thus we have the prop and mainstay necessary for the observance of the moral law. This bent of mind does not, however, exclude all self-love; it rather generates the only allowable egotism, which consists in this, that we love above all our *soul* and secure our future happiness. This is a noble selfishness, because its aim is directed toward the highest good. Nor is it narrow-minded: on the contrary, it is magnanimous, because in striving after its object it does not deprive others of their rights.

Furthermore, the belief in immortality leads man to a *true self-respect.* Real self-respect is possible only when everyone finds something in himself which under all circumstances is honourable and demands respect. Now, if man is immortal, he immediately becomes a

being that by its very nature surpasses all the creatures found in this world. Nay more! he sees the value attached to him by the Highest Being. For, a creature that is destined to participate in the felicity of God has a very conspicuous relation to Him. The esteem that man has of himself without the belief in immortality terminates in this, that he looks upon himself as the highest animal. But such a respect is nothing less than self-contempt.

All the moral disorders in man's life may be called *abuses of personal liberty.* Deprive man of the belief in immortality and what shall restrain him from these abuses? Conscience? If there is no immortality, conscience is a liar. Self-respect? Without a future existence, man, like the beast, must follow his every inclination. His natural love of goodness, justice, and equity? Sorry to say, man's evil inclinations by far overweigh his love of virtue. The only thing that might hold him in check would be egotism, or the police, neither of which figures very prominently in morality. One thing alone is effective, viz., the responsibility to an all-

seeing Judge whose sentence decides man's lot for all eternity.

Again, what is man without virtue and self-denial? A king in chains; the slave of his passions. And what is self-denial without the belief in immortality? Folly. If I am to expect no happier life I play the part of a fool when, through temperance and self-denial, I embitter my present existence. Indeed, under trying circumstances the practice of these virtues is impossible, because man has no desire to abstain from the pleasures of this world unless such a mode of procedure should obtain for him a remuneration, a higher enjoyment. We are not born for abstinence, but for indulgence; yes, for the enjoyment of unlimited happiness. Hence man would, in order to practice virtue, be forced to destroy his nature, which is impossible. Nevertheless, he can set little value by this miserable life and its pleasures if he knows that a greater boon will be given him. In this case the love of his eternal welfare goes hand in hand with temperance, and thus makes the latter not only possible, but also reasonable.

What is, after all, the most shameful

immorality in the eyes of a man who does not believe in the immortality of his soul? Only too easily is he led to look upon it as a natural necessity. The belief in immortality is the only medicine that gives strength to subdue the lower passions. Without faith in immortality, the gratification of the "lusts of the flesh" might even be taken as a perfection. For, if sensual gratification is a perfection in the animal, why not also in *mortal* man? Then, indeed, sensuality would be the "glad tidings" to mankind; whereas in the eyes of immortal man it is so low a degradation of his spirit that the mere thought thereof causes the blush of shame to appear on his countenance.

Man's moral greatness nowhere displays itself to such advantage as in the *patient and manly endurance of the trials of life.* Without the belief in immortality, man accounts the tyranical thraldom of fate as an accursed dæmon, from whose grasp he seeks, by all possible means, to escape. Should he nevertheless fall a victim to it, he has no other refuge than absolute despair or that internal secret despair which, out of

vanity, hides itself behind the mask of "Stoicism" and claims to "despise" the adversities of this life. Still, without a view to a better life, this is simply impossible in a being that, by its very nature, craves for happiness and prosperity. And then, can he who looks upon his material well-being as his everything; can such a man bear up under those terrible blows of fate that destroy all earthly happiness?

We have said very little as to how the spirituo-moral life of man is enhanced in the light of immortality. This is certain: the belief in immortality is the sublimest philosophy of life; in this view of life, man is not troubled about the paths through which a superior power leads him; he is perfectly at ease and absolutely certain as regards the end he is to attain; he realises his existence in both its phases and death the connecting link between the two. Thus, he learns to know himself and the God in whose providence he places all his confidence. And in this way he becomes happy by believing in a truth which alone can give a satisfactory answer to all the weighty questions.

Should this belief which so elevates man, which gives him such moral strength, which makes him so grand and so noble, which is the fountain of all human morality, which lifts mankind to the apex of moral perfection:—should this belief be without foundation, should it be falsehood? The status of morality has, throughout the history of the world, been in exact proportion to the vivid consciousness of personal immortality. But every being becomes more perfect according as it follows in a greater or lesser degree its incorrupt nature. Just as little as a being can give itself existence, so little can it give itself the development of that existence unless it draw it from nature. Therefore, whatever seems to man to be a necessary means to his perfection must be founded in his nature. This is actually the case with the belief in immortality. As soon, however, as another view of life (one according to which our whole existence comes to an end at death) is taken in its stead, all moral order in society must necessarily go to ruin, and, in the midst of the rapturous harmony of the

universe, the human race alone would be the representation of chaotic confusion, and would retrograde to its complete destruction. Nor could its greatest minds save it from ruin, because they would be but mere *ignes fatui*, who know not the "why and wherefore." How vain then is the supposition that man has arbitrarily raised himself to the belief in immortality! Falsehood would be more powerful, more beneficent than truth. From another point of view, man would foolishly have belied himself by making life-long mortification a duty, and thus subjecting himself to very great sacrifices without the guarantee of a bountiful remuneration.

If the individual receives its moral support and moral greatness from the belief in immortality, it is evident that the moral support of the state, of human society at large, draws the guarantee for its stability from the same source. For, if the individual is good-for-nothing, the state which is composed of such elements is in the same predicament.

"Justice is the foundation of states." This old but true saying holds good not only for justice in the stricter sense of the word,

for the well regulated administration of justice, but also for the observance of justice in all the relations of man to man; for justice in the performance of duty, for justice in the family, for justice with regard to mine and thine, and, above all, for justice in the relations between regent and subject. And what is the foundation of this universal justice? Is man out of himself so prone to justice that without any further basis, and without any effective motive, he will always abide by it? Alas! experience teaches a sad lesson in this respect.

The ultimate foundation on which society and with it the welfare of the state rests, stands or falls with the belief in immortality. In proof of this statement let us take a glance at precisely those man's relations that form the proper ties of human society; on whose strength or weakness, therefore, the weal or woe of the nations depends. That mere physical force, though it be ever so powerful, cannot hold human society together is a fact that no one can deny.

The first tie that must embrace all is a strong and faithful *sense of duty*.

What is the criterion of duty for a man who does not believe in a hereafter? Public opinion. And what is public opinion? It is essentially multiform and changeable according to time and place. But this would be the smallest evil; it is no firm check but rather a toy of the passions. Furthermore, how can the sense of duty be based on that which should be subject to that same sense? How can the law be at the mercy of him who is subject to the law? Thus it happens that people who regard public opinion as the highest norm of action very often have so dull a moral sense, that they allow themselves to wallow in injustice, if only public opinion pronounces and announces them as just. And what must be said concerning the sense of duty that is hidden from the civil law and the observation of men? For, there are also secret duties that are of vital importance for the public welfare, but are controlled by the individual conscience, and do not come within reach of the public. Conscience, however, loses its power and its sting with the denial of immortality.

How different is public morality when it is

based on the belief in immortality! Here the mainstay of duty is neither in ourselves nor in the fickle opinion of the public; but it is in Him who alone is unchangeable and perfect —in God. Duty is founded on the holy law of God, which is the expression of His most holy will, and as such extends to man the highest and surest reward—eternal happiness —in recompense for the faithful performance of his duties. This law lends sinews to our sense of duty, sanctifies it, and gives us courage, and all this without in the least endangering our own individual interests: it incites us joyfully to come up to all the requirements of our duties, even in the most painful circumstances of this life, by offering us a bountiful remuneration in the world to come. Even the most secret recesses of our heart are subject to the mandates of this law.

Another very important element of society is the *family*, that primordial institution with whose weal or woe public welfare is so intimately connected. And what is the condition of the family without belief in immortality? Can the family be a *sanctum* as it should and must be? Does not matrimony without the

unction of immortality fall down to the level of the animals' sexual relations? The sanction of the state in so-called civil marriages would be the only blessing on the matrimonial state, a blessing that has no power to elevate that state. What, on the other hand, is the family in the light of immortality? Here matrimony is primarily a state of life that must be entered upon with an eye to the future life, since the eternal happiness or misery of both parties in a great measure depends on this choice. This in itself imparts to matrimony a kind of religious benediction. Furthermore, the education of children becomes a very important and noble task of the parents, because it is not only a material training of the body, or at most a development of the physical and mental faculties for this life, but it is an education for God and eternity. This view deprives the parents of *absolute* dominion over the bodies and lives of their children and fills them instead with a feeling of great responsibility. This is the very reason why the belief in immortality gives to matrimony and the family the character of stability and indis-

solubility. For a state of life that has such grave responsibilities towards the children must by all means be stable. And does not this necessarily form an impregnable foundation for the welfare of human society?

Still other phases of society display the effects of immortality. The state is a union of families conjoined by the bond of a common authority. There must be rulers and subjects, superiors and inferiors. The welfare of the state depends in a great measure on the *correct relation, on the true unanimity* between these two parts. This relation, this unanimity, can only exist if the belief in immortality is the substratum of all the thoughts and actions in the state. In the first place this belief upholds the personal freedom and dignity of the individual and shields him against tyranny and despotic oppression.

Being immortal man is destined for God and is primarily accountable to Him. The state is under no circumstances allowed to interfere with this sphere of spirituo-moral liberty, because in this respect man is superior to the state which is an earthly institution, and as such inferior to man's higher destiny.

Thus all slavery of conscience is abolished; man's rights regarding his eternal destiny remain intact. Without immortality man, a mere earthly being, would be in great danger of being swallowed up by the state, and, having no higher destiny, he would, at the command of the state, be forced to sacrifice himself for the common welfare.

On the other hand, the belief in immortality guards also the *rights of authority*, of the rightful power, the law. If there is but *one* life we can hardly take it amiss if all men make the same claims to authority and power as those who are now in actual possession thereof; if they do not consider the laws to have morally binding force. Such a force does not exist unless there is immortality.

Thus is the belief in immortality the necessary foundation upon which every state must build its laws and its justice. If this belief is shaken the whole structure of human society begins to reel; if this belief falls, all social order falls with it. Just in our days this must be evident to all that have "eyes to see." Our age stands perplexed and helpless before the solution of a problem that

could never have become so difficult had not our public life been so contaminated and saturated by atheism and the denial of a future life. We refer to the social question.

Once man is convinced of the fact that he is destined for an everlasting and sublime existence; that this short life has import only in as far as it is a preparation for the life to come; that upon his moral conduct here depends his future happiness or misery, then all his exertions necessarily receive a fixed tendency, and he is first and above all intent on securing everlasting beatitude and escaping eternal perdition. The goods of this world have their chief value in this, that they are means whose judicious use secures those higher treasures. This does not mean to insinuate that all the grand undertakings of the human mind in material spheres would come to a standstill; but, that the desperate and frantic struggle for temporal gain would give way to a more tranquil and a more becoming exertion. If there is a future life, a God, the first commandment will read: Love God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself! Man

will then no longer see in his fellow-creature the enemy of his interests and the destroyer of his happiness; but his companion. For, the world beyond the grave has room and happiness enough for all. Uphold the belief in immortality and the law of abstinence from inferior goods for the purpose of gaining the higher will form a counter-balance to man's egotism.

The belief in immortality will principally establish *true equality and brotherly-love.* Nothing hurts the poor man so much as the disdain and contempt which he is very often made to suffer by the "upper" classes; nothing hurts him so much as the marked contrast between rich and poor. Immortality, however, brings to light the real value of even the poor. As regards his true spiritual greatness it gives him a position alongside the rich, gives him absolute equality, and destines him for the enjoyment of the same felicity in the other world. The rich on their part must acknowledge the poor as their co-equals and are not allowed to treat them as slaves. This cannot but bring about the reconciliation of the two classes: the

labourer must once more be raised to the real dignity of manhood, the capitalist must descend from the fictitious throne upon which he domineers as a demi-god and account himself as essentially no better than those he considered as demi-men. Nay more! he must respect and honour that fellow-being that will, perhaps, be his superior in the future state where a setting aright of all relations will effect true social order.

In a very special manner, however, it is the idea of *responsibility* (that necessarily accompanies the idea of an immortality) which forms the basis of social order. Responsibility greets both oppressor and oppressed with a mighty "*non licet.*" The man of power and wealth who has enriched himself by the sweat and blood of his fellow-creatures it threatens with a terrible judgment. To the poor labourer it affords consolation by giving him the hope of a better life; but it also forbids him to revolt against the lawful authority set up by God.

How must this belief in immortality fill the hearts of the poor with consolation; how

must it strengthen them to bear up under their heavy yoke: how on the other hand must it awaken fear in the hearts of the rich; how must it make them tremble unless they merit through charity what the poor attain through patience! Thus extending the same reward to patient poverty and to charitable wealth, this belief effects on the one hand the material relief of poverty without any disadvantage to the eternal welfare of the poor, and on the other hand it secures the everlasting felicity of the rich without endangering their earthly well-being. In this way the social welfare of human society is firmly established by precisely those riches that would, without the belief in immortality, be the source of everlasting hostility and social confusion.

The belief in immortality is therefore the only factor that can satisfactorily solve the social question. Very strikingly has Dr Hitze, the famous sociologist, remarked this when he said: "Try as we may, what can we offer the labourer? The little that we might be able to aggrandise his condition is infinitesimal. The labourer who, *because he*

does not believe in a future life, seeks and must seek his happiness in this world can never be appeased. He will continually pull at, and strive to break, those chains that tie him to this earthly order; he will ever conceive it as an injustice and ever be mindful that he has been excluded from the enjoyment of the goods of this world whereas others are wallowing in the midst thereof; he will never understand why he alone should bear the yoke of hard work and excruciating want, whereas others have no such burdens and no such wants. He who considers this social order to be the mere *work of man; he who does not believe in a future retribution* must revolt against this order and look upon it as the result of greed, deceit, and power."

Should then this belief in which alone there is salvation not only for the millions of individuals but also for society at large; which alone has the power to avert the threatening downfall of the moral and social order; which spreads a soothing and salutary influence over the human heart and over the conditions and fortunes of the nations; which

alone can make the world what it ought to be:—should this belief, we ask, be a mere deception, a fairy tale, the invention of idle philosophers or of priests? Is it not rather a truth, a reality founded in man's innermost nature?

Justly, therefore, says Pfleiderer:[1] "The hope of an immortal life is so peerlessly salutary a motive that mankind would not resign it even though there were theoretical reasons for doubting it; but since there are no such reasons this hope will be an abiding treasure for the people of all ages, a treasure whose value is not impaired by the fact that we know as little of the 'how' (?) of the future life as of mankind's distant future." How is it possible that notwithstanding such a statement this same theologian could previously assert that we have not even a theoretical certainty concerning the fact of an hereafter. That there is another life we have shown to be a philosophically certain consequence of philosophically certain premises, evident facts!

[1] *Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, II., 529.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNIVERSAL TESTIMONY OF MANKIND IS A PROOF FOR IMMORTALITY

"Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium."—CICERO, *Tusc. Disp.*, lib. i., c. 16.

IF really every man is created for immortality, if every man contains within himself the consciousness thereof, if in all his actions he displays a tendency toward it, then this desire of immortality must reveal itself in the whole human race as such, in the life of the peoples of all climes and all ages, from the darkest beginnings of history down to the present day. The belief in immortality must, if it is truth, be one of the oldest, one of the first truths in history; mankind must have, so to say, instinctively held fast to it and preserved it. Besides, like the belief in a Supreme Being, this truth of immortality

must, of its very nature and because of its paramount importance for the nations, at all times have been and still be one of the most obvious and practical elements of social life. For, without the belief in immortality the belief in God is neither truth nor of any consequence for the nations. A state built upon atheistic and materialistic principles never was and never will be stable. Moreover, we must be able to prove historically that in human society there is a real necessity for this belief. We must, therefore, be able to show that the whole human race as such has, notwithstanding all other aberrations, always believed in a future life. If we are able to do this the universal testimony of the human race becomes so overwhelming and decisive a proof for immortality that it would take a fool or a bigot to refuse the acceptance of this truth.

Such a testimony of the whole human race is really at hand. It is evidently not necessary for us to go the rounds of the earth with our reader and collect the testimonies of the individual people. P. Jos. Knabenbauer has done this in his excellent treatise, "The

Testimony of the Human Race for the Immortality of the Soul."[1] We shall satisfy ourselves by giving a general outline of the work, and then we will turn to the philosophical side of the question, and, by refuting the several objections against this proof, see whether this testimony has any demonstrative value for the truth of the belief in immortality.

Now for the testimony itself. Let us begin by considering the concrete manner in which the belief in immortality manifested itself. It would naturally reveal itself in the burial of the dead whose corpses were very frequently embalmed with the greatest possible care. Bellicose peoples had the custom of burying with the departed their favourite weapons; while among the more industrial races the dead were given their implements, and even children took their toys along into the grave. Many tribes, even to the present day, burn the widows and thus send them to follow their husbands into the other world. The negro tribes of Africa, many inhabitants of

[1] 6. Supplement to the *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Freiburg, 1878.

Polynesia and of North and South America, kill the slaves of a deceased master so that he might not be in want of servants on the other side. Here we might call attention also to the feasts that were held in honour of the dead, and that were celebrated with great solemnity and amid much rejoicing, because, as it was believed, the dead had entered a better life.

To this we must add the great care taken of the graves and the deep reverence felt for the burial grounds; a reverence that we find among all nations. The gigantic monuments erected in the earliest ages go to show that, *v.g.*, the Egyptians believed the houses of the living to be but lodgings, whereas the sepulchres of the dead are everlasting mansions. The desecration of the burial grounds was looked upon as one of the greatest crimes and was punished with capital punishment. The inscriptions on the tombstones, legible after the lapse of many millenniums, congratulate the departed on their entry into a secure and peaceful life in the other world.

Again, everywhere we find a firm belief in

the existence of a land of the dead; a world as well of happiness as of woe.

Just as universal is the belief in spirits. This we find both among civilised and savage peoples, so that almost every place and every tree had its proper spirit, which was frequently nothing else than a departed soul.

Then also there is the fear of dæmons and ghosts which, as history proves, goes back into the earliest ages, and was altogether universal. Even in the present day this fear is quite common, and seems to be ingrained into human nature, for it grows up with man from his very childhood, and even religious people are frequently unable to rid themselves of it. Some peoples thought these ghosts or dæmons to be their departed friends or relatives, and sometimes also their enemies. Another very popular practice among the ancients as well as among some modern peoples, was the questioning or incantation of the dead. Spiritism with its spectres is nothing else than a resuscitation of a heathenish custom.

Of all the facts that might be adduced in proof of our present thesis there is perhaps

none that would exhibit its truth more clearly than this, that the world-wide idolatry owes its existence, if not exclusively, at least to some extent, to this belief. The love and reverence shown the dead soon took the form of a conviction that these were now higher, superhuman beings, nay, that they had become powerful protectors of their progeny. Hence we find among very many nations the "Penates" upon whose altars sacrifices were offered in order to obtain their protection and assistance. In the main these altars were erected in honour of the chiefs and sovereigns of the tribes who gradually received the worship of gods, and upon them the homage that was originally paid to the one true God gradually devolved.

Thus we find traces of the belief in immortality among all the nations without exception.[1] In all the stages of civilisation, from the savage hordes of Africa up to the highly cultured Greeks and Romans, we detect not only a vague belief in a future

[1] The Nirwana of the Buddhist does not mean the annihilation of the soul but rather the highest perfection thereof. *Cf.* Knabenbauer, *l. c.*, p. 60.

existence but also the belief in a future retribution; in a place of punishment and an abode of bliss. Even the hope of a future resurrection of the body is found among many nations — a proof for the firmness of the belief in the immortality of the soul.

Furthermore, the belief in a future life was not a mere theory, an assumption—as such it could never have asserted itself through all the ages—no, the whole life of the nations in all its various phases was saturated with it; the domestic life, the political institutions, the morals and customs, were based on it. Thus is the belief in immortality a fact that meets us on every page of history. This belief always existed, and can be found in the histories of all nations from the primitive inhabitants of Australia up to the Eskimo, who sees in the aurora borealis the souls of his departed friends moving to and fro. Notwithstanding all the differences of race, zone, descent, and the many changes to which the nations are subject, this belief is and remains: it passes down from generation to generation.

Some few individuals may drown this conviction; they may give utterance to "philosophical" doubts, but they cannot infringe upon the universality of this belief. Mankind, as such, unconcernedly walks the path of immortality. This belief is the corner-stone of each and every community, and as often as this corner-stone has been displaced, so often have the nations collapsed. We can therefore justly apply Plutarch's words concerning God to immortality and say: "If you traverse the earth you may find cities without walls, or literature, or laws, or fixed habitations, or coin. But a city destitute of temples and gods—a city that employeth not prayers and oracles, that offereth not sacrifice to obtain blessings and avert evil—and, let us add, that believeth not in immortality—no one has ever seen, or ever shall see."[1]

Our age has been especially industrious in trying to discover nations that did not or do not believe in immortality, and there have been some travellers who pretended to

[1] See Cardinal Gibbons, *Our Christian Heritage*, 1889, p. 24.—Tr.

have found such peoples in Central Africa, Australia, and Polynesia. All statements to this effect have been refuted time and again, and have been shown to be the results of very deficient and superficial observation; and not infrequently of gross misrepresentation. Nevertheless, some claim that the *Jews*[1]—that race which was throughout antiquity the sole standard-bearer of the pure idea of God—knew nothing of a future life. Their sacred books, they say, their prophets and teachers, do not mention a life beyond the grave. Even for the most important feature in the life of the Jew, for the observance of the Law, the books of the Old Testament promise a temporal reward only; the severest threats contain only temporal punishments, or at most, the death and destruction of the whole people. Our adversaries, in maintaining that the Jews knew nothing of the immortality of the soul, adduce as the most cogent proof for their statement, Ecclesiastes iii. 19.

[1] Kant, *Religion innerbalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Rosenkranz' edition, x., 151. *Cf.* Dr L. Atzberger, *Die Christliche Eschatologie*, Freiburg, 1890, p. 17.

In the first place only ignorance or misapprehension could give such an explanation to the passage in question. When Ecclesiastes says in ver. 18 that the "sons of men are like beasts," and that "the death of man and of beasts is one," and "as man dieth, so they also die" ver. 19, we must not lose sight of the preacher's intention. The purpose of the whole book is to set forth the vanity of the things of this world, and in the present instance the author attains his end by showing that man, both as regards the necessaries of life (air, food, clothing, etc.), and his destiny, has in his material existence no superiority over the animal; that he is subject to destruction, lives of dust, and shall return to dust. Thus far, everyone who firmly believes in immortality can safely go. The main difficulty lies in ver. 21. "Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward (= to God in the other world) and if the spirits of the beasts descend downward" (= return to dust)? Here, too, the preacher speaks of our sensitive life, our sensible knowledge, from which these things are hidden. He wishes to say: Man

is so wretched that, as far as appearances go, his death is like that of the animal. That he does not intend to deny or doubt immortality is evident from the fact that he introduces the whole passage with the statement: "God shall judge both the just and the wicked." But if God shall judge *all*, the just and the wicked, then, evidently the dead must still live or at least rise again. That this idea of the future universal judgment is the tendency of the whole book can be seen from its conclusion: "Remember thy Creator . . . before the dust return to its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it" (xii. 1, 7). And let us hear the peroration of the whole speech: "Fear God and keep His commandments. . . . And all things that are done, God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil" (xii. 13, 14). This solves all difficulties since here the preacher acknowledges the positive existence of the human soul after its separation from the body.

For the observance of the law temporal rewards and punishments are, it is true, set

forth. But does this include the denial of a future retribution? By no means! There *must* be a future retribution because conscience itself testifies it. There was, however, a very special reason for laying such stress on earthly emoluments. The Jews, as the Orientals in general, were very prone to being moved by the sensible; and hence earthly advantages and disadvantages are very apt to influence them even in religious matters. "The stress laid on earthly retribution served the purpose of keeping the idea of retribution in general alive in the hearts of the people."[1] That the sacred books of the Jews make no mention of a future life is absolutely false.

Even the narrative of man's creation as contrasted to that of the animal gives clear indications. Concerning the creation of plants and animals, we read: "Let the waters bring forth . . . Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind." Herein is expressed that the animal body and the

[1] That the Pentateuch contained "*in nuce* the whole Christian eschatology and the fundamental principles of all further eschatological revelations" is proven by Dr Atzberger, *l. c.*, pp. 19-35.

animal soul are earthly and material. The next chapter, however, records man's creation in the following words:[1] "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life." The body, therefore, is formed of earth, *i.e.*, of pre-existing matter; the soul, on the other hand, is not material, not made of pre-existing matter; but comes directly from God: it is, in a certain sense, His "breath," and hence "created *to the image of God.*"[2] Since then the spirit, the soul, is not earthly, it is neither perishable, but is like unto God in duration, as the Book of Wisdom says: "For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him."[3] And in order that this sublime origin of the soul and its importance for eternal duration might not be overlooked, death is described as a process that affects only the *one*, the *corporeal part* of man: "till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return." Now, what was taken and formed

[1] Gen. ii. 7. [2] Gen. i. 27.
[3] Wisd. ii. 23.

out of the earth? Answer: The body. The breath of God, however, the soul, does not succumb to this process of death and dissolution. And why not? We have the answer in another passage of holy writ, which combines Gen. ii. 7 and iii. 19: "And the dust return to its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it."[1]

We could, to the confusion of our adversaries, point also to the *sheol*, the meeting-place of the souls after death, a place of expectation, purification, and temporary punishment. We could call attention to the description of death as a "returning to one's fathers," a "gathering to one's people," to which the entrance into the nether world, the "burial" is in apposition.[2]

Hence we cannot doubt that the Jews knew something of immortality. It must nevertheless seem strange at first sight that so fundamental a truth was not as much accentuated as it is in the New Testament. A satisfactory solution of this difficulty is,

[1] Eccl. xii. 7.

[2] For further proofs see Prov. xv. 24; Dan. xii. 2; Isa. li. 6; xxxv. 10; xlviii. 22; lvii. 21; lxvi. 24. *Cf.* Atzberger, *l. c.*, pp. 36-109.

however, at hand. First of all this truth was held as absolutely certain both by the Jews and by their neighbours, the heathens. It is an indisputable fact that precisely the nations from which the Hebrews took their origin, and among which they lived, viz., the Chaldeans and Egyptians, had a very firm belief in the immortality of the soul. A special inculcation of this belief was consequently not necessary, not even in the event of their falling into the idolatry of the heathens.

Secondly, the very purpose of the Old Law offers an explanation for the lack of stress laid on the happy immortality. The end and aim of the Old Law was the Redeemer. Therefore it centres all hopes, all expectation of both the present and the future life, in the advent of the Saviour. Only in and through Christ does it lift its eyes to a *happy* immortality, but not a single soul could enter into that *felicitous* life until Christ had opened the portals of heaven. Hence this truth, as all other truths regarding the perfection of mankind, is still contained in the Old Law under the sealed

legacy that can be opened only after the death of the testator and that was only then to be validated and enforced. The Old Law therefore contains immortality, necessarily presupposes it, and in many instances clearly expresses it.

A *nation*, then, that has not believed in the immortality of the soul cannot be found in the history of the human race.

But have there not at all times been individuals, especially philosophers, who denied or at least doubted the fact of a future existence? And is there any scarcity of such people in our own days? Could we not perhaps argue: A postulate nature must make itself evident at all times and in all places; but the belief in immortality was not always and everywhere; therefore it is not a postulate of nature, *i.e.*, man is not of his nature immortal?

If you are speaking of necessary and not of free creatures (and if there be no external hindrances) your major is correct; otherwise it is false. The natural development of a free creature is, to a great extent, subject to the dominion of the free will by which it can be stayed or even destroyed. The individual man

can pluck out his eye: will nature on this account cease to produce eyes? Man can, if he will, doubt any and every truth, as experience shows. Not so very long ago there have been philosophical schools in Germany that denied the reality of the whole visible world. Should this be a reason for asserting that nature teaches this doctrine? Or could a future historian say the reality of the visible world was a matter of doubt in Germany during the nineteenth century?

Again, we are coping with a problem whose truth reason testifies; but which nevertheless has its difficulties. The γνῶθι σεαυτόν presents difficulties not only in moral respects, but also with regard to the physical essence of the soul.

Nature, or rather God through nature, has indeed abundantly provided for the consciousness of immortality. Every man inevitably and necessarily receives the idea of a future, an endless future, and he realises that an everlasting life is better than a finite term of existence. Consequently every man necessarily desires immortality. In this way he also arrives at the knowledge that his soul can live for ever, and must be of such a nature as to exist

eternally. Still, he cannot so readily grasp the proper essence of the soul as to understand immediately and fully the reason for, and necessity of, immortality. But there are many instances in which the same thing happens. The "how" of everlasting life is a subject that requires prolonged thought and reasoning; and it is in this process that man can easily be led astray. The difficulties encountered in a more exact investigation into the "how" can, especially in philosophically incorrect thought and erroneous premises, cast a shadow of doubt even on the "that"—*i.e.*, the fact of immortality. This precisely is the reason that we find doubt and denial more frequently among the learned than among the great masses of the people.

But now we must turn our attention to a more important phase of the question. Philosophy as well as experience teach us that the will of the individual man exercises no mean influence over the judgments of the intellect that are not immediately evident truths; the will, therefore, can prejudice the intellect against a certain truth, so that the latter faculty will be the more apt to deny a truth the less the heart

is willing to approve of its consequences. A sick man, *v.g.*, has very weighty reasons for expecting his approaching death: the statements of competent physicians, his own feelings, and very unmistakable symptoms. But if this be unpalatable to him, he is not forced to accept it, because his will can stay the assent of the intellect, and thus he may live himself into the absurdest hopes. So great is the power of the will if only man takes interest in denying. *Stat pro ratione voluntas!*

Indeed, we naturally love truth as well as good, because truth is good. That falsehood may gain influence over us, it must appear to the heart *better* than truth. Now, can man possibly find such an indemnity; can he find any interest in denying immortality? Undoubtedly! For this truth is not like the problem of Pythagoras, a mere theory; it is fraught with practical consequences. If I am immortal, an everlasting retribution awaits me; if not, I am nothing more than an animal, and am perfectly justified in living as a beast of the field. This morality is extremely welcome to the sensual man, and for this reason the schools that denied

immortality had such a flourishing period during the days of old Rome's moral depravity. We see that on the whole all the "systems," both of ancient and modern date, that are replete with immoral consequences and give free scope to the passions, prosper in spite of the flood of absurdities contained in their teachings.

Nevertheless, even disregarding all this, the scepticism of some few philosophical schools is not in the least derogatory to the value of our arguments. By far the greater number of philosophers—really great minds—beginning with Plato and his disciples, are of our opinion, and they actually offer proofs for their doctrine, whereas the unbelieving philosophers are either silent or give vent to vain phraseology and ridicule; at all events, they have not adduced a single solid proof for the soul's immortality. Again, they have never succeeded in pointing out any flaws in the proofs for immortality. And what is, after all, a handful of philosophers and their disciples in comparison with all the peoples of the earth? Why, they actually help to invigorate our proof: at all times

mankind has ignored them, while it steadily held to the path of immortality. It has left the sceptic over to his reveries. What deep roots must, therefore, this belief have struck in human nature!

Another objection might be gathered from the *false*, ofttimes ridiculous, *conceptions* that many of the nations outside the pale of Christianity entertained concerning immortality. Were we to collect all the absurdities contained in heathen religions with regard to the life in the other world, we should be confounded by the aberrations of the human mind. From this the philosophers of the last century have drawn the conclusion. Since all these conceptions were erroneous they can furnish no proof for the truth of immortality; for truth must be uniform. This is a sophistical conclusion. The heathen were indeed mistaken in their conceptions of the "how," *i.e.*, the mode of a future life; but as regards the "that," *i.e.*, the fact of an everlasting existence, all, without a single exception, agree.

It was almost necessary that there should be some aberrations concerning the "how"

of the future life. In the first place, the idea of the beyond as revealed by Christianity is so grand and so sublime that, out of himself, man could never have attained it. Besides, we are not able to form "phantasms" of purely spiritual conditions. What wonder, then, that every nation pictured the future to itself in such a manner as to harmonise with its own peculiar mode of life in this world? Secondly, this belief in immortality was handed down by word of mouth from father to son, and hence it was exposed to the danger of being saturated with myths. Thirdly, these misconceptions owed their origin to idolatry. It was but a necessary consequence that after the distortion of the idea of God the idea of the future life should also suffer. But precisely these lamentable aberrations from the primitive truths show most clearly how deep the belief in immortality was rooted in the human heart. If, in a trial at court, a number of witnesses have, in many respects, contradictory views, but are nevertheless unanimous and resolute concerning the point at issue, we may be sure that this one thing is really true. The

same holds good with regard to the belief in immortality. There are hardly two nations who pictured to themselves the "how" of the future life in the same way; but all are unanimous in proclaiming the fact that man shall continue to exist even after his body has been laid into the grave. Never could all those misrepresentations have obtained among so many nations had there not been an invincible natural tendency toward the belief in immortality, and, if in a certain sense every error is misrepresented truth, this is really the case in the present instance. False coins and nocuous medicines are afloat; but these could never have received acknowledgment would they not have been mistaken for the good coins and beneficial medicines that exist. Men, left to themselves, can hardly agree on a single question. Now if through all the ages they do agree on a certain truth, it is evident that the irresistible forces of nature and truth bring about this union. Countless systems that have been invented by man have made their début on the stage of this world, have received for a while the plaudits of the public, and then

passed off to make room for others. Thus have the opinions of the greatest genii come to naught. But whatever remains fixed and firm amidst such changes must be founded in man's innermost nature.

Another objection that seems to have some value, and that is urged by modern Rationalists, is the following: The universal belief in immortality owes its existence and its duration to the liberal *education* of mankind. It is a prejudice handed down from the earliest ages; a prejudice that one generation taught the other until our enlightened and independent age discovered the error. Therefore the universality of the belief in immortality does not prove the truth thereof. Immortality is not founded in human nature, but has been dragged into it in spite of itself; and this happened the more easily because man naturally looks up, through the misery of this life, to the consolation of a better existence.

Well, as for the "consolatory" element of the belief in immortality, we have already given our opinion. For a great, if not for the greater part of humanity, this belief has rather a terrifying than a consolatory aspect.

It would therefore have acted negatively rather than positively. And still it exists; even to-day. Religious tradition and education are, no doubt, very important factors. History proves that religious truth has been preserved to the nations not so much by formal study as by tradition; that they looked upon it as a voice from the past; that originally it was purer and richer, and that only in the course of time it was distorted by superstition.

Education, however, must necessarily be the mainstay of tradition. It cannot but strike the historiographer how it was at all possible that in spite of the long line of tradition, and notwithstanding the endless varieties of education among the different nations, this tradition concerning the *fact* of a future life and its retribution has everywhere remained identical; that notwithstanding the peculiarities of thought, manner of life, political and social institutions, not a single nation lost it in the course of time. This evidently shows us that we are dealing with something more than a fictitious and erroneous tradition.

It is furthermore psychologically impossible that these should be the *only* means for preserving the belief in immortality. Tradition and education can never lastingly put anything into man that is contrary to his nature. Here the saying of Horace fully obtains: *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret!*[1] Nature will ever rebel: the greater the oppression, the more energetic the opposition. If the human soul is not immortal, it is mortal. Then man's belief in immortality is contrary to his own nature, and this would, notwithstanding all education and all love of the antique, give invincible testimony against this belief. Education has undoubtedly a very great influence, but when it comes into conflict with nature it is important; it must have a foundation, a support, otherwise the man will reject what the youth has learned. How often do life, judgments, and opinions of the mature man not at all harmonise with the views of the child. Again, if the belief in immortality were a fairy-tale, by far the greater part of humanity would gladly have rejected the

[1] Horace, Ep. i., 10, 24.

old dogma of a future life and its retribution. For it is an old adage: "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth." A nature that is so characterised must evidently conceive the belief in immortality as a hard and unrelishable check, a terrible threat. But since mankind has nevertheless retained and still retains this belief, it thereby gives a continuous testimony against itself, its life and action: a testimony that must be founded on truth.

Another explanation that modern "science" offers for the origin and stability of the belief in immortality is the one excogitated by Darwin, Tylor, Strauss, and others. According to these men this belief should have originated from *dreams*. "It is also probable, as Mr Tylor has shown, that dreams may have first given rise to the notion of spirits; for savages do not readily distinguish between subjective and objective impressions. When a savage dreams, the figures which appear before him are believed to have come from a distance, and to stand over him; or "the soul of the dreamer goes out on its travels,

and comes home with a remembrance of what it has seen."[1]

Justly has this superficial attempt at an explanation been met by the question: If the belief in spirits were a mere hallucination, how could it ever have become *universal?* How should an isolated subjective and individual impression, and the sophism built on it, ever have become the *common property of the whole human race*, and have formed an essential and irremovable element of its thought and volition? Whatever is common to the whole human race cannot be *hallucination;* it must ultimately be founded on truth, because the voice of nature and instinct are ever directed to something that actually exists in the spheres of reality.

When taken under close scrutiny, this explanation through dreams is less scientific than it is naïve. In the first place, no rational creature will take dreams as proofs. Many nations have undoubtedly attached much importance to dreams, but hardly more so than some of the highly intelligent individuals

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, i., p. 131 : Collier & Son, N.Y., 1902.

of our own days, who place all their confidence in fortune-telling, palmistry, spiritism, and necromancy. Let us now suppose that Strauss and Darwin dreamt a dream from which they deduced the immortality of the soul. Would they in this case have found many disciples? Everyone knows that a dream is a dream, a reminiscence of the past; for a dreamer does not produce anything, he merely combines, with more or less caprice, past events. We all have experienced this. Now, many an individual may, in adverse circumstances, etc., seek to obtain advice from dreams: but to accept a truth of such paramount importance, of such incalculable consequences, on the mere testimony of dreams, is a thing that neither the people of to-day nor those of centuries ago would do, even though men as intelligent as Darwin and Strauss had had the happiness of dreaming a dream. The assertion that the whole human race accepted this truth and held it for so many centuries on the mere testimony of a few dreamers, is tantamount to saying: You are all fools: I am the genius, the wise man.

Now, why do so many people when they dream of the dead believe that this or that departed soul really appeared to them? Because they believe in the spiritual existence of the dead. The superstitious abuse of the belief in immortality through vain interpretations of dreams is found most frequently precisely among those people that claim to have discarded the belief in a future life. This is another striking example how deeply rooted is the belief in immortality in human nature.

A more formidable objection against our argument might be gathered from the fact that for centuries the greater part of humanity laboured under palpable errors, and that therefore the universality of the belief in immortality is no conclusive proof for its truth. Such an error is, *v.g.*, the opinion that *the sun revolves around the earth, and the latter is stationary.* First of all, this does not warrant the conclusion that man can be deceived also with regard to the belief in immortality. And why not? Because this latter is a truth which of all others is the weightiest, as far as man is concerned;

and hence it is a truth which he should and must know; whereas the fact that the earth revolves around the sun is comparatively of little consequence. Moreover, immortality is a truth taken from man's innermost nature, and must, therefore, be compatible with the tendencies of that nature; while on the other hand the constitution of the fact whether the motion of the sun is merely relative or absolute demands many exact observations and very difficult mathematical calculations; so difficult, indeed, that even the mathematical proof of the great Galileo was, as he was told by his contemporaries, incorrect: That in such matters the whole human race might err, is very natural. Finally, mankind was almost necessarily misled into the belief in the motion of the sun by the plausible testimony of the senses, and since it originated from *real* appearances the error was, as it were, natural; the proof that there were appearances only was, as already stated, very difficult. The belief in immortality, however, is *contrary* to all evidence of the senses, which perceive nothing but death and corruption; and still it exists. It can, there-

fore, only be the voice of the *spiritual* nature that testifies against the senses.

A final objection that might be urged is: Man's belief in immortality was, after all, rather a *faint presentiment* than a firm conviction. It exercised no morally elevating influence over the nations, and hence they did not seriously believe the truth thereof. Only since the rise and spread of Christianity has this belief assumed a definite and fixed form; only with Christianity did it begin to affect morality and civilisation.

We have already remarked that as to the *mode* of the future life, the *nature* of its reward and punishment, the belief in immortality was undoubtedly a faint presentiment, a phantastical image. But as regards the *fact* of a future life, this belief existed and still exists in heathendom as definitely and fixedly as at all possible. It would, indeed, take a tyro in historical knowledge to deny this fact, a fact which they that deny immortality have not the power to explain. That the belief in immortality did not sufficiently affect morality, and in many instances could not do so, is due to idolatry and its crimes,

which naturally tended to neutralise all the effects of immortality.

There is another reason why the influence on morality was hardly perceptible: Throughout the Pagan world there pervaded, and still pervades, a despair of God and His Providence. Surely, the Pagans believed in immortality; but what is the good of this belief if there is no firm hope in a *happy* immortality? Hence the great masses of the people sank into their graves like miserable herds without confidently lifting their eyes to that happy future of whose existence they were so well aware. Evidently, such a sterile belief could not act upon morality in a very elevating and vivifying manner. But was it, because of this, no firm conviction? If there is, if ever there has been, a nation that firmly believes in immortality, it is the 296 millions inhabitants of East India. And still, they do not show any conspicuous signs of the moral influence of their belief. Christianity alone can give man a clear, definite, and rational representation of the future life and of a *perfect moral* retribution. Christ pointed out to mankind the way

thither through man's own moral elevation, thus, together with the belief in immortality, giving back to us hope.

The voices of the nations of all times and in all places, when asked for their opinion concerning the truth of immortality, answer: Man is immortal. All the nations, the most civilised as well as the most barbarous, all without a single exception, acknowledge this belief, which, together with the belief in one God, is the first and oldest in history, and shone most resplendent in the primitive ages. Mankind has, throughout the many years of its existence, amid the most exorbitant aberrations and wanderings of the human mind in religious, social, political, moral, and scientific ground, instinctively and with all the tenacity of its nature adhered to this belief. This was at all times the fundamental and indelible characteristic of all nations. It was a want, a necessity for all peoples—some few philosophers may have discarded it, but the human race as such, never. Even though the "how" of immortality ever remained an insoluble problem; even though it was ever enshrouded by

impenetrable obscurity and deep mysteriousness; even though it very often was a solemn condemnation of the status of morality: mankind never wavered in its faith in the fact of a future existence. The propensity toward immortality appears as universally as reason itself, so that it frequently was the only distinguishing trait between man and animal: a trait that imprinted upon man's degraded brow the sign of his higher destiny.

How explain all this, unless we admit that the belief in immortality is deep-rooted in the human soul; that it has been given man together with his nature; that it was altogether connatural for man; than that he should in the course of time lose its tradition. Man must therefore be born for immortality: he must bring a natural desire for it into the world, As never a born atheist, so neither a born denier of immortality has been formed, both are formed by forcible inoculation. The belief in immortality, therefore, is truth; for the human soul has not only the power of forming the concept of an endless existence, but it has also the impulse, the law of attributing to the

object of this concept, reality. If, then, reason is a cognitive faculty, this concept and this judgment must be true; for cognition is nothing else than the mental expression of real truth.

The historical proof from the general conviction of the nations is therefore, taken in itself, a strictly scientific and independent argument for immortality. We have no reason whatever, as Spiers humbly admits, "to envy naturalists, because their results are apparently beyond all doubt." Or are, perhaps, our arguments less valuable? Our proofs are on a par with those of scientists. They investigate for the natural instincts of every little insect, and seek to discover the propensities of its puny nature. Once they have discovered these, they argue: This animal needs this kind of food; therefore this food must exist, and this animal must be able to find it. At the approach of winter, birds of passage feel a longing for, and prepare to go to, warmer climes: they hurriedly gather their scattered families, and singing a song of farewell, they hurry off in winged flight. Therefore these warm countries exist. At the end of its caterpillar-stadium

the caterpillar rejuvenates to another life, and after having lived for some time in the moist earth, shows a desire to live in the open air. Therefore the life of the caterpillar before these changes is of a different nature than after them. The animals found as fossils in the oldest strata of the earth have *eyes*. Therefore the age in which they lived must have been a time of *light*. Who would question the validity of such arguments? And the great and powerful law of nature inscribed in mankind, the instinct, the longing for immortality, the desire of a rejuvenated, happier life in the mansions of bliss—this alone should be meaningless, this alone should be vanity and deception, an antiquated superstition which science casts aside with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders? Then has the doom of natural science tolled; because then the laws of nature are illusions, inventions of idle brains.

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Once more summing up the results of our investigation into the immortality of the soul, we can say:—

The physical as well as the moral nature of

our soul, and the general conviction of mankind, attest the immortality of the soul. If the soul did not continue to exist after the dissolution of the body, our whole internal organisation and the most stable laws of nature would come to naught. If it is true that every being is connatural with its food, the soul is immortal, because truth, its proper nourishment, is immortal. If the perfection of every being is necessarily proportionate with the fundamental conditions of its existence, the soul contains within itself the principle of immortality, because the soul's perfection or destruction are in exact proportion with the belief in, or denial of its immortality. If it is true that the organisation of a being is in conformity with its destiny, the soul which is not made exclusively for this earthly life, since nothing in this world can satisfy it, is destined to enjoying a higher life. If it is true that there is such a thing as justice, and that conscience which reveals it to us is no mere delusion, the soul is immortal, because both the just and the wicked depart this life without having witnessed the administration of justice.

Unless, therefore, we wish to contradict both

reason and nature, we must necessarily adhere to the belief in immortality. We must allow ourselves to be guided by reason and nature; we must accept their verdict without being terrified by the dread consequences of truth. We must look to the proofs and their power of conviction. If man were not immortal, he would be a being replete with monstrous contradictions; a monstrosity, the like of which has not yet been found. He that robs man of immortality, that confines man's destiny within the narrow limits of the seventy or eighty years he is allowed to pass in this miserable world—or rather, which are granted him to prepare for death—mistakes the most powerful inclinations of the human heart; sets at defiance the conviction of the whole human race. Without the immortality of the soul, man would be a walking lie; he would lose his hold on morality, and his mental superiority would vanish; his dignity and greatness would be no more, because he would be degraded to the level of the beast. Without immortality, man would despair when he sees the Fates making ready to cut the thread of life; suicide would be the great law of nature. Then, too, would the

noble gifts with which the Creator has endowed man be nothing more than mockery and cruelty, because man is the only creature that ever longs for happiness, rest, and peace, and still does not find them. On the contrary, because of his higher gifts, his sufferings are greater than those of the animal, and, therefore, those things that were to be his blessing would turn out to be his curse.

But no, this is not the case! The wonderful harmony of the universe, upon whose summit rational man rules supreme, displays an Infinite Wisdom who could not have put us into the wrong place. The error would have fallen back on Him, and in His very masterpiece He would have created insoluble contradictions.

CHAPTER X

IMMORTALITY IN THE LIGHT OF REVELATION

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth."—Job xix. 25.

The immortality of the human soul is a truth deduced from the soul's very *nature*. The actual realisation of the idea of immortality in all its perfection cannot, however, be attained by human wisdom when it is entirely thrown on its own resources, because the immortality of the body, particularly of the glorified body, belongs to the grace of supernatural beatification. Hence the Creator, from the very beginning, saw to it that man received the belief in the immortality of both body and soul as a divine gift. The very first pages of Holy Writ relate the story of man's creation as that of an immortal being: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness."[1] This

[1] Gen. i. 26.

significant word of the Pentateuch proclaims the dignity of man's nature: he originates from God, and is like to Him. It belongs, however, to the likeness of God, not only that man has intellect and freewill, and thus in a certain sense reflect the divine sovereignty, but more especially that the human soul, being a simple spirit, have like God an indestructible, immortal life. Originally man was destined also for bodily immortality. Since the body, too, should have been continually rejuvenated through the fruit of the tree of life, until God would take it out of this earth without subjecting it to corruption or death. But sin came, and with it the curse of God—the punishment of death. Mankind has never forgotten this curse, but many have despaired of the coming of the promised Redeemer. True, mankind took with it out of Paradise the belief in immortality, and has kept it to the present day; but with the increase of sin and the corruption of morals, man's belief in a hereafter became weaker, and his hope for a happy eternity more obscure; so much so, that with the greater part of the human race the belief in a future life was degraded to a caricature of truth

that was unable to produce great and noble works.

This was the condition in which Jesus Christ found the human race. Through His coming the belief in immortality was revivified and more clearly defined. Christ speaks not like the learned and the philosophers of the ages, but like one who has power; He speaks the language of intuitive, absolute certainty. He is immortality itself, "life everlasting," that was "in the beginning with God" and that appeared to us. He knows how God created man to His own image and likeness; for He that is "the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared it to us."[1] "And this the promise which He hath promised us, life everlasting,"[2] that we too may partake of His happy immortality. He proclaims that God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living,"[3] and that He calls everything to life.

And indeed He calls the whole man, soul and body, to life everlasting. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the

[1] John i. 18. [2] 1 John ii. 25. [3] Matt. xxii. 32.

Son of God, and they that hear shall live."[1] The warrant for this, He who is "the firstfruits of them that sleep"[2] and them that arise gives us in the following words: "I am the resurrection and the life"—not only of those that have arisen and are living, for "he that believeth in Me, though he be dead, shall live."[3] Since Christ has uttered these words the whole Christian world proclaims: "I know my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth."[4]

What a difference between this, the divine testimony of Jesus Christ, and the grossly sensible objection that is often heard: No one has as yet returned to life to tell us what kind of a life awaits us in the future. No one then has returned, and nevertheless—queer as it is—the whole human race has ever believed in the future life from which no one has returned; hence this belief is much more wonderful than if some one had returned to inform us about that future state. No one has returned. And what would be the good of it if some one did return? Would,

[1] John v. 25.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 20.
[3] John xi. 25.
[4] Job xix. 25.

in such a case, the obstinate believe? It would portray a poor knowledge of human nature were we to believe this. "The rich man . . . lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, saw Abraham afar off, and cried: Father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus) to my five brethren, that he may testify unto them lest they come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. But he said: No, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."[1] But it is not true that no one rose again from the dead. One at least returned, He who spoke this parable, and in Him it was fulfilled.

Now, what kind of joys await man in the other world? An ocean of happiness whose shores are continually receding; the only true, the highest good, God Himself will be our reward. He is the centre of heaven around which all the nations will assemble:

[1] Luke xvi. 19-31.

yes, the whole heaven. How sublime, and yet how natural! We are created for an infinite good, and where else should this be if not in God? "We shall see Him as he is,"[1] Him, the charming beauty that "was begotten before the day star,"[2] the eternal Father; Him "who is," of whom the universe is but a mere shadow, in whom all truth, all beauty, all power, all majesty, all goodness and love are centred. And when we shall see the Eternal Light in His light,[3] shall we not then be in perfect possession of knowledge and truth? How will poor and despised virtue here shine resplendent on its throne! For, "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne."[4] Shall not virtue be elevated and superabundantly rewarded "in the throne" of the Most High? Shall it not be sufficiently empowered when with Him it shall rule the world? And when the same hand that created the universe and that lies heavily upon hell "shall wipe away all tears"[5] that have been shed in this world for the sake of God and of virtue;

[1] John iii. 2. [2] Ps. cix. 3. [3] Ps. xxxv. 10.
[4] Apoc. iii. 21. [5] Apoc. xxi. 4.

when the nations "shall be inebriated with the plenty of His house, and shall be made to drink of the torrent of His pleasure,"[1] will they not cry out: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear!"[2] Our limited intellects are not able to comprehend the sublime grandeur of this happiness, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[3]

This heaven is the prize which Christ holds out to mankind in recompense for all its moral struggles. Through internal moral elevation, through free action, through the victory over self, it should be merited. He admonishes the world with the words: "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."[4] And again: "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"[5]

And whom does He invite to this noble and heroic warfare? The whole human race

[1] Ps. xxxv. 9. [2] Ps. xvi. 15. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[4] Matt. xi. 12. [5] Mark viii. 36.

from Adam down to the last inhabitant of the earth. He is "the true light which enlightened every man that cometh into this world"[1] "that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have *life everlasting*."[2] His invitation extends itself in a special manner to the poor, the oppressed, and the mourners; but also to the rich, that they may make use of their power and riches for the welfare of their fellow-men. Not only is heaven offered to all of us, but each one can merit higher and higher degrees of felicity; for heaven repays everything, every good thought as well as every drink of water offered to our neighbour in the name of God.

How sublime, how rational, and how compatible with the natural craving of even the most forlorn human being. What germs of patience and of heroic resignation does not this implant into the heart of even the poorest man; what a salutory admonition does it awaken in the soul of the rich and the mighty; for "they are last that shall be first, and they are first that shall be last."[3] What an enormous change does the Christian

[1] John i. 9. [2] John iii. 15. [3] Luke xiii. 30.

idea of immortality bring about in the world, and what a deep knowledge of human happiness does Christianity display by striving to save every individual!

With what joy have, in the course of ages, honest men heard the voice of Christ and then embraced a belief that costs so many and such hard sacrifices—a belief that, in a word, makes life a continuous self-immolation —in exchange for that world that "eye hath not seen"! Almost two thousand years have elapsed since millions and millions lie prostrate at the feet of Christ, crying out: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of *eternal life*."[1] Yes, they confess with the whole force of faith, and with the hope of a Job, not only the immortality of the soul, but also the resurrection of the body: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom."[2] What a *moral elevation* has this

[1] John vi. 68. [2] Job xix. 25-28.

Christian belief in immortality wrought in the world! Who could count all the heroes of self-denial and self-sacrifice? This belief has incited countless men to the most ardent fidelity to duty; it has strengthened them for the most heroic sacrifices, and led them to the highest moral perfection.

Christ, however, has not only pointed out to us the way to immortality, but has also given us the strength to attain it. Since the time of His death on the cross, through which He obtained for us everlasting life, grace continually flows to us through the sacraments, beginning with Baptism, in which the Christian receives the unction and the principle of immortality; Holy Eucharist, the "living bread" which "if any man eat he shall live for ever,"[1] down to the sacrament of the dying. It is the strength which Christianity gives to the dying that strikingly shows that she alone possesses the real and perfect belief in immortality. The great tremor of nature is subdued, and becomes for the Christian the messenger of liberty, the way to immortality. Hard by the limits

[1] John vi. 51, 52.

of the darkest and most frightful path through which man must travel, he finds the cross, the pledge of immortality. "O death, where is thy sting"?[1] At the burial of her departed, the Catholic Church begins her prayers—in mockery, as it were, of death — with the words: *Regem, cui omnia vivunt, venite adoremus!*

This is in a few strokes a faint portrait of the Christian idea of immortality. In conclusion, let us view immortality in the light of some of the great questions that continually, and especially in our days, harass the minds of men.

As regards the social question, the Christian belief in immortality alone has raised all men, even the poorest labourer, to the highest dignity. It has brought liberty to innumerable slaves, because it called all men to the same final destiny, because it preached the immortality of *every* soul, and because it invited all to the one great society, to "life everlasting." In maintaining these eternal and inalienable rights it has robbed the difference of social standing of the hard,

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

the bitter, and the humiliating. Still more! The Christian belief in immortality has evidently given preference to the "common people" by ranking them above the so-called "upper classes." Or, shall not "the poor in spirit," "the meek," "they that mourn," "they that hunger and thirst after justice," "they that suffer persecution," shall not these "possess the land" and "sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"? Does not Christ speak pre-eminently of these as "blessed"? And does He not hurl against the rich and the mighty, the great and the unmerciful, who do not honour and love the weak, the poor, and the humble as their co-equals and co-inheritors of God, does He not hurl against these a terrible "Woe unto you"? "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1]

"There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled

[1] Matt. xix. 24.

with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him."[1] Thus the drama in this life.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou are tormented."[2] This is the compensation which the Christian's belief in immortality holds to view. It reconciles the poor with his lot, and, with supernatural force, incites the rich to mercy; it holds out to all the same destiny, viz., heaven. Nor does it matter how man merits heaven, whether by means of patiently borne poverty or well-used riches.

The social question is, however, primarily a

[1] Luke xvi. 19-21. [2] Luke xvi. 22-26.

question of *charity*. Were it not for stoic egoism and its cruelty to fellow-creatures, there would be no social question at all. But the Christian belief in immortality radically removes this merciless egoism: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself for the love of God, because he too is God's creature, and like yourself destined to life everlasting. Thus Christ has imposed upon all men the duty of actual and practical charity, and has at the same time elevated it to a norm by which the love of God can be measured; "for he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?"[1]

This Christian charity has also the power of bringing the social question to its solution. Can this dreadful avarice, this terrible struggle for every farthing, this frenzical sensuality, be thought of in a man who is saturated with the vileness of the things of this world, in comparison with those of the next? In the true and real Christianity the ground upon which Socialism thrives is wholly wanting.

Furthermore, the Christian belief in immortality elucidates the great problem of all ages,

[1] 1 John iv. 20.

the mystery of the *government of the world*, and in doing this reconciles man with his lot. Without the belief in immortality, nothing is left for the man who is "placed into this gigantic world-machine, never safe, even for a moment, against making an incautious move and against being seized and mangled," but to despair. But the Christian belief in immortality explains to us why man, though born for happiness, is nevertheless subject to much suffering. Originally this was not the case. Man was created immortal and good. But because he willed to attain everlasting life without the help of God, he "dropp'd like a falling star" from his height—from God to himself. Still, earthly sufferings were not to be his curse; through Jesus Christ they became the most salutary means for the attainment of immortality. Through suffering to light; through trials to glory! This has, since the fall of our first parents, been the hard but victorious solution of the multitudinous army of men marching towards eternity. And what is this short life that passes like a cloud; what is this short span of time, even though it should include in one human heart all possible

suffering; what is this in comparison with the glory and happiness of eternity? The apostle St Paul answered: "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[1]

Finally, what a light does the Christian belief in immortality throw on *divine providence!* This becomes nothing less than the loving and powerful hand of the Almighty Father that leads man through the labyrinths of this life to immortality. In order to have a good view of a drama, one must be in the audience and not on the stage. Now, the faithful Christian, through his mortification, is as it were off the stage of life, and takes his position in God, and from this vantage-ground he is enabled to view the whole drama of human life and divine providence, and is in a position to pass a correct judgment on them. With absolute confidence he gives himself over to Him who is to guide him to immortality, who is a better judge of all his ways than he himself, and who is more desirous of his salvation. The Christian therefore looks upon everything in this world

[1] Rom. viii. 18.

as coming from the hand of God; everything he counts as a gift and a grace. The seeming injustice in the order of the world, the triumph of vice over virtue, does not irritate him. He knows that the day will come when the Son of Man shall come with all His Majesty and all His angels to judge the living and the dead.

This is the day of retribution, the day on which an almighty hand will rectify all earthly incongruities; the day on which divine providence will justify itself, both before the nations of the earth and before every individual man; the close of the history of the world, and the beginning of eternity.

Here indeed "the wicked spring as the grass, and flourish";[1] and why this? Because if they do not repent they shall be preserved for the day of vengeance. Here virtue is frequently oppressed and persecuted in the fight against internal and external force. But, "then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labours."[2] And this drama shall be concluded with the irrevocable sentence pronounced over mankind: "Depart from me, ye

[1] Psalms xci. 7. [2] Wisdom v. 1.

cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels";[1] whereas the just shall follow Christ, and enter "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."[2] There shall be no night, and they will not need the light of the sun, because the Lord our God will enlighten them, and they shall rule with Him from eternity to eternity.

In what a sublime and dazzling light does the Christian belief in immortality stand before us! How far surpassing everything ever invented by human ingenuity! This belief is compatible with human nature, with the innermost yearnings of even the poorest son of man for happiness, with the desire for the great and the eternal, with the longing for infinite joy and felicity.

As the millions of noble souls of the past, present, and future have drawn, still draw, and ever shall draw, consolation, strength, and hope from the thought of immortality, so may we too rejoice in the confession, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth."[3] For the faithful

[1] Matt. xxv. 41. [2] Matt. xxv. 34.
[3] Job xix. 25.

Christian the word of the Redeemer shines like a bright star through the darkness of this life: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever."[1]

[1] John xi. 25-26.

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